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CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

(*First Series*)

Edited

With an Introduction on *Folk-Play Making*

By

FREDERICK H. KOCH

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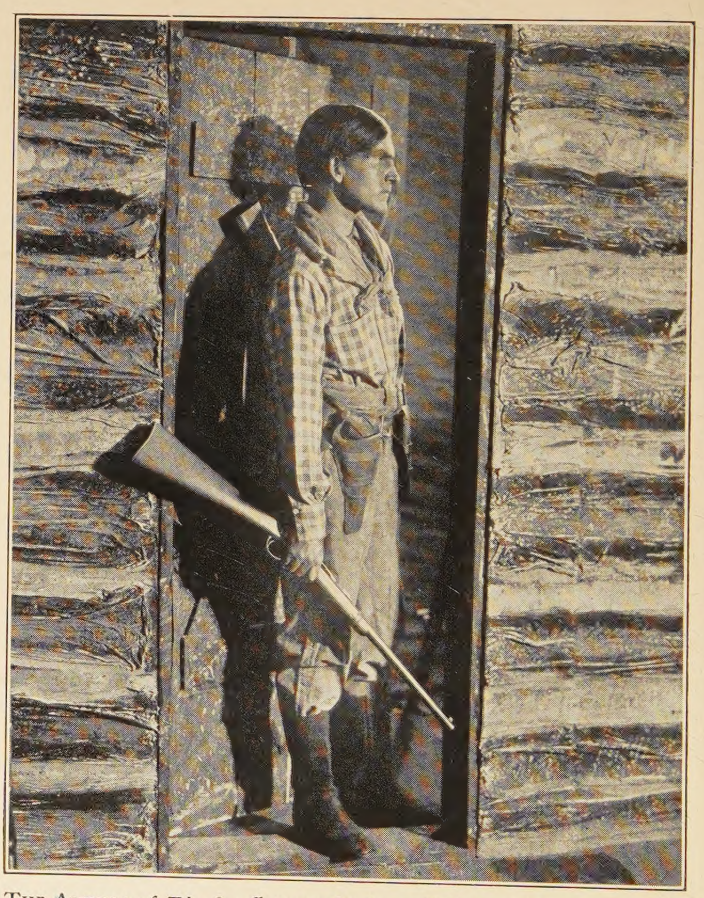

THE AUTHOR of *The Scuffletown Outlaws,* William Norment Cox, as HENRY BERRY LOWRIE, fearless young leader of the Croatan tribe, the chief character in his own play. He used the favorite gun of the Lowrie leader in The Playmakers' original production.

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton.

THIRD SERIES

CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS

Edited
With an Introduction
By
FREDERICK H. KOCH
Founder and Director of The Carolina Playmakers
and
A Foreword
By
PAUL GREEN

Illustrated from photographs of the original productions of the plays

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TO
THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WHOSE PLAYS THESE ARE

THE PLAYMAKERS' AIM

FIRST: *To encourage and promote dramatic art, especially by the production and publishing of plays.*

SECOND: *To serve as an experimental theatre for the young playwright seeking to translate into fresh dramatic forms the traditions and present-day life of the people.*

THIRD: *To extend their influence in the establishment of a native theatre in other states.*

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THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS' DESIGN

The design of The Carolina Playmakers on the opposite page by Mary De B. Graves of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the home of The Playmakers, suggests something of the range of the materials from which the Carolina Folk-Plays *are made—Blackbeard, pirate of the Carolina coast, looking to the past; the young mountain man, the mother and child, looking to the future. It suggests the expression of our native life and its perpetuation in these simple plays, toward a folk theatre of North Carolina—a theatre which has contributed to the state a fresh consciousness of itself —its lore and its legends, its romantic history, and its stirring new life of to-day.*

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS DESIGN

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKER

By Frederick H. Koch

Founder of The Dakota Playmakers and
The Carolina Playmakers

Who are these walking in November—
the trees bare, the birds singing no more?
These are sisters, these are the brethren
marching to Canaan Land.—Paul Green.

The Editor of *The Theatre Arts Monthly,* in reviewing the performances of The Carolina Playmakers in New York City last fall, wrote: "There is nothing that can represent Carolina better to the people of other states, near and far, than the record of her own people in the comic and the tragic moments of their living and their history. There is nothing that *does* represent them better—no product of the soil or of the machine than the contribution The Carolina Playmakers are making."

The third book of our plays suggests new fields for the native theatre. Here are plays of the Carolina country, written by our young playwrights at the university. From the first our particular interest has been

the making of fresh dramatic forms, in playwriting and in acting. We have cherished the *locality,* believing that if the locality were interpreted faithfully, it might show us the way to the universal. For if we can see the lives of those about us with understanding—with imagination—why may we not interpret that life in significant images for all? It was so with the Greeks before us, and with our own English forebears. It has been so in all lasting art. It should be so for us here in America.

Years ago when the writer of this article went as an Instructor in English to a frontier university on the prairies of Dakota and inquired what kind of plays they had been presenting there, a young man ventured with evident pride, "At commencement last year we did *The Merchant of Venice, Up-To-Date*"—and this antedated the present-day vogue of Shakespeare in modern dress by nearly twenty years.

"Up-to-date," I said. "What is that?"

"Oh, we had a lot of hits in it on the Faculty!"

I confess my enthusiasm for the drama in Dakota was, for the time being, considerably chastened. But the more I thought of it, the more the boy's answer challenged me. "Why, he's right," I found myself admitting. "Why shouldn't drama be *up-to-date*—about the life we live and the people we know?" And I found later that I had no difficulty in getting these same boys and girls of the prairie to write interesting plays of the ranch and of the farm, of the cowboy trails, and of the frontier life of their fathers.

Another experience of those days which I recall,

interesting in this connection, is a freshman's theme about "A Storm in New York City." I couldn't understand how the boy happened to write on such a subject and I called him into my office.

"Have you ever been in New York?" I asked him.

"No . . ." he admitted frankly.

"Where do you come from?"

"I live in the country, near Langdon," he explained.

"Oh, yes.—That's where they had a cyclone last week, wasn't it?"

"Yes. You know up there in Langdon I saw where the cyclone had driven a hitching-post right through a telegraph pole!"—And, with assurance in his voice, "That's where I got my idea!"

"You went through that cyclone yourself and then wrote about a storm at the Flatiron Building in New York City, which you have never seen. Why did you do that?"

"Oh, I thought it would be *more interesting.*"

This attitude seems to be characteristic of many of our youthful writers—and of some who are not so youthful. It seems to me the young playwright must, first of all, see the interesting things in the life about him if he is to interpret life interestingly to others.

In the Introduction to the second volume of our *Carolina Folk-Plays,* I have suggested the way in which these plays are written in the university course in playwriting, produced by The Carolina Playmakers in their theatre at Chapel Hill, and then taken on tour. I shall indicate now, as well as I can, the way in which the plays in the present volume came into being.

THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS

The Scuffletown Outlaws has been a great favorite in The Playmakers' repertory. It concerns the same Lowrie family which Paul Green utilized in the earliest of his plays, *The Last of the Lowries.** The idea came to the author, William Norment Cox, of Robeson County, North Carolina, on our annual Playmakers' tour of eastern North Carolina, several years ago. "Bill" Cox was one of the company, and he had not yet tried his hand at writing a play.

"Prof," he said to me, "I want to take you out over this Croatan section. There is a great play to be written here."

"Well, Bill," I said, "I guess *you'll* have to write it then."

He took me out into the country to the home of his old Scotch uncle, Frank MacKay, who recounted to us his experiences in the feud between the Scotch settlers and the famous Croatan band. It was a tale of thrilling adventure he had to tell. He still carried five buckshot in his back from the gun of the outlaw chieftain, Henry Berry Lowrie.

"There used to be *six*—but I had one of 'em taken out," he explained dryly.

"Why didn't you have the others taken out too, Uncle Frank?"

"That one was enough—that's why!"

Since his earliest childhood young Cox lived within a stone's throw of Scuffletown Swamp—the mysterious

* Paul Green's play, *The Last of the Lowries,* is included in the *First Series* of our *Carolina Folk-Plays.*

confines of this notorious gang of Indian outlaws. His forefathers were leaders in the campaign to exterminate them. A kinsman of his, Mr. Owen Norment, was shot down from ambush a few feet from his own doorstep, with his wife and children looking on; several other relatives were wounded in defending their homes against the ravages of the Lowrie clan.

The Croatans have a romantic history. Their forefathers are thought to have absorbed Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony—the earliest English settlers in America, who had disappeared from Fort Raleigh, on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, by 1590. They migrated to the southwestern part of what is now Robeson County, and lived in peace with the Scotch settlers there, assuming many of their characteristics and adopting their language. This accounts for the Scotch influences in their speech.

The relations between the Colonists and the Croatans prior to the War between the States were peaceful and happy. They rebelled against being conscripted in the Confederate cause, and, under the leadership of the fearless young Henry Berry Lowrie, for ten years they waged a bitter warfare with their Scotch neighbors. Large rewards were offered for the capture of the bandits, fifty thousand dollars being set on Henry Berry alone—dead or alive.

Such inducements led to many plots for capturing him, the most famous being that hatched by John Sanders, a native of Nova Scotia, who won the confidence and affection of the tribe by two years' residence with them as a missionary. The play centers in the scheme

of John Sanders to assist the Croatans in making their escape by night, in wagons, to the frontiers of Texas; his attempted betrayal of them; and his tragic death at the hands of Steve Lowrie, the meanest of the gang. John Sanders presents the most tragic figure in all the Lowrie history.

A year later we played Red Springs again, and "Bill" Cox's tragedy, *The Scuffletown Outlaws,* was included in the bill. The author himself played the part of the Lowrie chief, with uncanny sympathy and with grim reality. In the play he carried a gun which formerly belonged to Henry Berry Lowrie—given to the young Croatan chief by a deserting Union soldier, and taken from his dead body in Ashpole Swamp by the man who shot him, Dan Holcomb, who later traded it for a fiddle. On the stock of the gun are carved the initials "S. L." (Steve Lowrie) and "A. S." (Andrew or "Boss" Strong in the play), and there are three notches recording white men killed.

In the audience at Red Springs were Frank MacKay and others who recalled vividly the terror of the incident portrayed in the drama.

When I saw "Uncle Frank" after the performance I asked him how he liked Bill's play.

"It was fine, all right! But I guess it was too real for me. I could hardly sit through it."

The play really made a sensation, for the tradition of Henry Berry Lowrie is still fresh in the memory of the oldest inhabitants, and is well known throughout North Carolina.

The author has interpreted his materials with re-

markable sincerity and with a breadth of sympathy unusual in a young writer. He himself says: *"The Scuffletown Outlaws* was written to throw a true light upon the deplorable condition which existed in Robeson County, North Carolina, immediately after the Civil War. The question is a delicate one and it is well-nigh impossible to present a just picture of the affair. I ask you not to condemn the Croatan Indians too harshly nor to sympathize with the good white people too freely. They were both right. The trouble was kept alive by a pyramiding of circumstances which the settlers as well as the outlaws would gladly have removed if there had been any way to accomplish a mutual settlement. I know the history of these people as well as any one living to-day can be expected to know it. This is my excuse for writing the play."

IN DIXON'S KITCHEN

Perhaps the comedy of a country courtship *In Dixon's Kitchen,* by Wilbur Stout—written by him in the University course in playwriting, English 31, with the assistance of Ellen Lay, another member of the course, will illustrate the friendly spirit of collaboration in our playwriting. As I have explained before,* this course is conducted informally, the Instructor and the students seated about a long table. The spirit of the group is communal. There is no text-book of dramatic technique to inhibit the young writer's impulse. The approach is frankly empirical. The students come to

* In my Introduction to the *Second Series* of *Carolina Folk-Plays.*

the meetings of the course with vague ideas of plays-in-the-making. There is much lively discussion, and the unsuspecting novice is often surprised by the reactions of the different members of the group. But no matter how astounding the criticism may be, it is always honest and does present the viewpoint of a potential audience. It challenges the young author, and gives him a new perspective in his work. In this way his conception is tested and enriched by the varying viewpoints of his fellows. Perhaps the following lines, written by one of our young Playmakers in the early days in Dakota, will suggest our method of approach:

> If you can see the world with me
> And I can see the world with you,
> I'm sure that both of us will see
> Things that neither of us do.

In Dixon's Kitchen was Wilbur Stout's first play. The author came from the little town of Burlington, in the Piedmont Section of North Carolina—a prosperous farming community. I remember when he first announced his idea for the play:

"I know about a country boy's courtship which ought to make a play. The old man used to stamp on the floor of his bedroom upstairs as a signal for the boy to go home. One night the boy—we'll call him 'Lem'—conceived the idea of pretending to leave. He called out to the girl a loud 'Good-by,' and banged the outside door. Then after a little he slipped in through the window in his stocking feet to finish saying 'Good-night.' But the father came in and discovered his trick."

"That's a good one," some one laughs. "But how did the father happen to come in?"

And another pipes up, "I think you ought to make use of the little brother who is always butting in on the courtship."

"That's good," from the prospective playwright. "The girl had two brothers and I can work them both in for some good laughs."

Then a rival suitor is added to complicate the action, and a few days later, when the embryo play comes back to be read to the group, it has the elements of a real plot.

A spirited discussion ensues. "The ending is weak." —"Why not have one of the brothers steal Lem's shoes, so he can't get away?"

"That's bully! I'll do it."

And—with the assistance of Ellen Lay, one of the co-eds in the course, in phrasing the speeches of the girl (which Wilbur declared he could not possibly write down), with much re-shaping of the plot, revising of the characters, recasting of the dialogue, the comedy *In Dixon's Kitchen* finally emerged. Of course it was rewritten again and again before it was ready, at last, for a tryout on the Playmakers' stage. And it underwent still further changes in the lines and in the stage business in the process of rehearsal, before it was finally ready for production.

So the play was really a composite product of all the members of the group, with the experience of the Instructor to guide the instinct of the young playwright in the complex process of building a play.

Wilbur Stout has given us here an authentic comedy of the country folk of his own neighborhood. Much of the conversation, he tells us, was set down verbatim. The incident, which we suspect—although he has never admitted it—was drawn from his own experience, was somewhat modified for dramatic purposes. And the play is dedicated by the author "to the real Annie Lee, and to all others who have been courting in the country and have contended with the perplexing problem of the Little Brother."

Since leaving the University of North Carolina, Wilbur Stout—now a Ph.D.—has become a "professor" of playwriting in a West Virginia college and his students last year wrote and produced a bill of their own *West Virginia Folk-Plays*.

I cannot refrain from quoting here from a letter Wilbur wrote recently, reminding me of certain offstage rôles he was conscripted to play during his student days at Chapel Hill: "When Shakespeare listed the parts we play in life, he must have forgotten those who speak only in back-stage noises. Neglecting such matters as killing Henry Berry Lowrie [in Paul Green's *The Last of the Lowries*] with G. D. Crawford's army '.45,' my speaking parts have included a jack-ass [Old Bob in the original production of his own play *In Dixon's Kitchen*], a swamp-owl [which hooted in Paul Green's play of the *Lowries*], and a rooster [in Pearl Setzer's comedy *The Black Rooster*]. This fall I narrowly missed having to be a cuckoo. Thank heaven I escaped that!" He is too modest to remind me of the important speaking parts he played

here on our Carolina stage—particularly the diverting drollery of his admirable characterization of the big brother Jake in *Dogwood Bushes,* his own charming comedy of a country boy, Bert Perry, who spent his days in writing poetry and in dreaming of going to the big city "to learn to write books."

JOB'S KINFOLKS

The author of *Job's Kinfolks,* Loretto Carroll Bailey, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is barely twenty years of age. But she has given us in this play a searching study of a group of mill people from her own neighborhood in her home town of Winston-Salem. She has made use of a crisis in the lives of three generations in the Meadows family. She tells me she tried to make the incident, which forms the plot of her play, a faithful "imitation of life." The lives of these people she regards as not necessarily tragic. They do not, as a class, "hate the mill," but rather cherish it as the heart of their economic and of their social well-being. To her they are not essentially different from the rest of us. They are in search of the things we all pursue—a measure of prosperity and of happiness, which they find in the mill as we find them in other ways. They are our kin.

Job's Kinfolks seems to me a remarkable play for so young a writer. Besides writing the play, the author enacted to the life the chief character, old Kizzie—the querulous, eighty-year-old grandmother of the family. It may be interesting to note, in this connection,

that not infrequently do we find that the youthful playwright plays, with uncommon ability, a part in the play he has written.

A SHOTGUN SPLICIN'

This is the first play by Gertrude Wilson Coffin of Chapel Hill, and she played the leading rôle—that of Sairey Sam Mull, the inquisitive old gossip who is serving as postmistress—inimitably. "This is no effort to air a family skeleton, to point a moral, or even to adorn an old wives' tale," the author tells us. It is not their "distinction with a difference" that she has endeavored to portray, but that directness of thought and speech characteristic of those to whom topics are few and thoroughly discussed. "It is an attempt to apply a lifetime spent in and around the neighborhood, to one probable local happening. The thought and speech of former neighbors is intended." The characters, however, are composite and the situation was invented.

The author makes an important contribution in *A Shotgun Splicin'* in preserving the manners and the racy vernacular in her uncommonly authentic characterization of a simple social order which is yielding fast to the forces that beat upon it to break it up—as one of our reviewers has suggested. We think a good deal in the phrases and the idiom of daily use, in the contacts of men and women in the day's work; and in these, perhaps, we have the best means of determining what the people think and how they think. Such a record as this will be invaluable to those who shall come after us.

LIGHTED CANDLES

Here is a play drawn from the tragic life of a mountain girl of Mitchell County some thirty years ago. The scene is a remote valley of the Carolina highlands, and the author, Margaret Bland of Charlotte, has given us a genre picture of a family well known to her.

The tale which forms the basis of *Lighted Candles,* she heard by the fireside of a lonely old woman, who often invited her "to set a spell" to visit.

It is a strange tale of a young husband who, growing tired of hoeing his corn and of trying to wrest a scant living for his family from the rocky mountain slopes, had gone off to the West, "leavin' his wife an' young-uns" behind. Much of the conversation the author has remembered and cherished for us in this play.

QUARE MEDICINE

A COMEDY BY PAUL GREEN

Quare Medicine is Paul Green's first comedy. It was written for the occasion of the dedication of The Playmakers Theatre building, the week of November 23, 1925. I have written of him in a foreword to his first published book, *The Lord's Will and Other Carolina Plays.* Born on a farm in Harnett County in eastern Carolina, Paul Green is as much a part of North Carolina as the soil from which he springs. His plays are as indigenous as the pine tree to his sand-hills. Like the tree his roots strike deep. And from the raw materials of the land he draws forth the life itself.—After a performance of *Old Wash Lucas* (originally *The*

Miser) on one of our Playmakers' tours, a man in the audience said to me, "I know every member of that family; it's all *true.*"

I remember when young Green returned from the war to his studies—in the fall of 1919. The war had made a deep impression on him, and the first play he wrote in the University playwriting course was a transcript of his own experience in the trenches of France. Then came the first play to be produced by our Carolina Playmakers—*The Last of the Lowries.* Here, we knew, was a sound artist—a new playwright of tragic power and poetic insight. There is a lyric note intrinsic in all of Green's dramatic writing. Even in the homely comedy of *Quare Medicine* there is in the doggerel chanting of Doctor Immanuel a rare feeling for the imagery and the melody of the simple country folk he knows so well—his own people.

In this play, Paul Green recalls a familiar figure from his boyhood days in the little town of Lillington, North Carolina. To those acquainted with the rural life of eastern Carolina as it was a few years ago, the patent-medicine vendor or quack doctor is not unknown. Formerly this species of cure-all could be met with frequently enough as he plied his trade among the country people with considerable profit to himself. Of late years, though, his tribe has more and more decreased before the inroads of science and sanitary methods. And in our complex civilization he will soon be lost altogether. The so-called doctor pictured in this play is by no means a true representative of the type. He does, however, resemble a loud-mouthed lonely

fellow, the author tells me, who used to dare to sell his wares before the courthouse in Lillington during "court." The situation which Doctor Immanuel untangles, is by no means a usual one. But it is true that these doctors often exercised among their clientele both a veterinary and a spiritual influence hard to conceive of now.

I recall in the early days of the Playwriting course, when we gathered around a long seminar table in an upper room of the old Library Building here, Paul Green asking me one afternoon a question which was really a challenge: "Prof, where is this thing going to lead us to, anyhow?" I have thought about his question many times, and I am still thinking about it. Of one thing I am certain, however—we would do well to encourage the young playwright in expressing the life he knows, and we can help him by providing a stage for him. Perhaps he may be able to help us on our way.

Only the other day Paul brought to me a copy of his latest volume *In the Valley and Other Carolina Plays,* and on the fly-leaf he wrote these lines:

> *Who are these walking in November—*
> *the trees bare, the birds singing no more?*
> *These are the sisters, these are the brethren*
> *marching to Canaan Land.*

For are we not all sisters and brethren marching to Canaan Land?

Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
June 20, 1928.

THE PLAYMAKERS AND OUR ART

By Paul Green

From its beginning, three hundred years ago, until the present, North Carolina has made no lasting contribution to the art of the world, and what is said of this state can be said of most of our Southern states. Several millions of people have lived and died here, and no one has set himself aside in high-minded and intelligent devotion to record a single one of these lives, nor to propound in the devious ways of art any of the hopes, struggles, disappointments and attainments that made up the sum of their existence. And from knowledge of the past it would seem that such a record is worth while.

This state has never produced a single great work of art. I am not talking about the factories, railroads, agricultural and commercial industries and the many and one creations of what is more or less called the practical mind. In a way they are forms of art too. At least they have their æsthetic side—their pattern, their fulfilled design and completed function and, in addition, the pleasure resulting to the maker and planner. But one must remember that they have also produced their slaves—even more slaves than creators

and free men, and so therewith stand somewhat in condemnation. What I am especially concerned with here is the so-called finer arts. And as far as they count we can call the hogs till our tongues drop out and there will be no stir in the pasture.

Have we had a great painter? A great musician? A great sculptor? A great architect? A great poet, novelist, dramatist, essayist, biographer—a great anything so far as the subject of art is concerned? We have not. We've not had even an adequate one in any of these. Other states in the Union, to limit the matter nearer to hand and to souls of not so heavenly stature, have had their Emerson, Longfellow, Thoreau, Poe, Whitman, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, Whistler, Saint Gaudens, Winslow Homer, Henry James, Stanford White, Theodore Dreiser, Mrs. Wharton, Miss Cather, Edna Millay, Sinclair Lewis, Robinson Jeffers, Upton Sinclair, Eugene O'Neill and many, many others. I mention these simply at random. But we North Carolinians have had no one. True, we've had O. Henry in the short story, and have named cigars, drug stores, mattresses, candies and hotels, after him, but still, if I may say so, he remains for me a man without a vision, not a great writer, his life seeming in itself to be much more significant than his books. In nearly everything he wrote he played his characters about at will. And when a writer creates characters he might do it with reverence and honor—even awe. To him they should be living souls, people in their own right, and should never be switched and pop-whipped in the clutch of the author's plot or design.

O. Henry never so treated his creations. He was an ingenious man, not a great one.

And how explain this lack, this dullness of the records of our lives and days? For it is true that we have had plenty of records, plenty of thus and so, and about it and about, but nothing great and real, nothing surpassingly enlightened or enlightening. We've had numerous poets, would-be novelists, columnists, dabblers in water-colors and bangers on instruments. None of them have had much meaning for you and me nor for the world at large. We haven't bred the real thing. And why? Nobody knows. There are a thousand and one possible suggestions and theories but they are no more than partial descriptions and come along after the train's done gone. There was no explanation as to why those fellows in the parable were in the midst of dull business except the simple one that they were not really fishing. And the only answer to our lack and dullness is the simple one that we haven't been at the real business of production. Then how can we produce art? Nobody knows. Why we haven't done it and how we may do it—both are mysteries. It all is part of that strange matter known as living. As the Scriptures put it, and as Hamlet put it, and as the old farmer, eyeing the sky for rain, puts it, "It will come when it will come." But be it ever so mysterious, we don't profit by laying the burden on God or on the weather. There are aids—some in the form of prayers and some in the form of everyday matters. They are only aids though, and can never be more. The cause and source will forever be mysterious and so discussion

is pretty much worthless *except* as it concerns these aids and the individual who strives to use them.

One of the first and most apparent helps towards an escape from this artistic lethargy and emptiness is to become acutely conscious that such is our condition. That is relatively a simple matter. We only have to look squarely at the facts. They are written down in the records and a blind man running can read them. As soon as we know what we are and have been so long, it is unthinkable that we shan't try to improve. The second and realest help is the most difficult and yet the most necessary, if we are to do our duty before God and man—the duty of building monuments in the name of what is finest and most beautiful in the lives of human beings. And that also is a becoming conscious. It is the becoming conscious of the marvel of being alive. It is not a moral matter, nor a practical matter. It rather is more nearly that something symbolized and denoted in the word spiritual—the word that had significance for souls in Victorian days. Now how can we so become conscious? If it were as difficult as it seems at first sight, certain and many of us would be condemned to hell from the beginning. But it so happens that here there is in this no dogmatic division of sheep and goats, of lost and saved. For all people (even idiots maybe) have this consciousness, this sense of beauty, to be specific. But they have it more or less. And the whole burden and responsibility rests upon our making the less more.

And how can that be done? How can there be progress towards such a coming to pass? There is no

definite answer, for it is individual with every individual. In the main he must work it out for himself. The institutions of education, the technologies of industries that minister to man's comfort cannot give it, cannot of themselves increase it. They can but be used as partial means in this process. Again, it is a personal matter of a man's own living. He has the privileges of choice from books. He can draw from wind and weather, from inspiring lives about him, from the broken and the oppressed, from the triumphant and successful—from all that walk on God's green earth and under God's high heaven. He can draw sustenance from all that is around him. He can increase within him more and more the light that lighteth. And for all men there is this strange way of salvation, and no one can save him but himself. So cast down your nets where you are if you dwell by the sea. Or if a laborer in the field, go forth with strength and song. Push on, let heads be raised and faces set to the rising sun. In the cool of the evening God will walk there and a blessing will remain on the lifted or the bowed.

At least it seems so.

And so I for one hold that this work of The Carolina Playmakers in the publishing of their folk-plays and touring with them, in the putting out of a new magazine—*The Carolina Play-Book,* in the founding of dramatic clubs and in the state-wide organization of The Carolina Dramatic Association with tournaments and an annual Festival, study groups, clubs and more clubs, discussion and re-discussion—all is good.

They are working along with and in a sound way are supplementing the schools and colleges; they are gradually making literature and other forms of art things of concern with us generally and are serving to help us get our eyes open. And don't we need it? We need to stir our will-power, revivify our senses, shake our minds out of their deadness. Rise and shine, as the negroes sing. And the more we shine the more power we have to shine—that's our blessed miracle. And that alone so far as I can see is our proper excuse for being. If that is true—and it is true—the Bible and the Victorians still have much worth our study and appreciation. Go to it—all is part of our world, and the world is for our appreciation or it remains wasted upon us. In the words of a revised version, grow in grace. So will it to be and struggle to bring it to pass, and our heavy responsibility is somewhat discharged. Then upon a day iron palings that divide will be less cruel. I believe that. And the fear of the low for the powerful will be lessened. The slave will see some easement in his chains, and the pitiful and lost will have the records of their lives set down. And they the more will not have lived in vain. For it is by such living records, records and more records that we can pack up, store up and hand down accumulated living unto those that shall come after, and they thereby shall be made more aware of the power and glory of man and the universe in which he struggled for a season. They will have more food to feed upon, more possibilities of quickening their lives to wonder and joy.

And what material we have had and put to no use! —Material for music, poems, pictures, novels, songs— matter for dreams. But we've had no dreamers. Where is the man, where are the men? Come out of your hiding-place. Strike up the harps, let the bands play. Where shall we find him who shall light up the struggles of our people? Who will tell of the builders, the road-makers, the pioneers, the builders of cities, or railroads? Their records stand unsupported in themselves. Let them have their place in story and song— in the illumination of art.—These are high-sounding phrases, but they have some meaning, I hope.—Who among us has told the story of the lonesome seashore, of the early settlers along that ocean, of the wrecks and disasters there? Nobody. Along the empty sandbanks lie rotting ribs of many a ship, the disappearing records of struggle and death. In that wide and barren land of sand and battered trees there are symbols of man and his bravery, enough to move an army. And yet through all these years they have failed to touch the heart of a single North Carolinian. I mean touch him so that he had to cry out. And the light and darkness among those sounds and shallows there, and the wonders in the sky above. Where is our painter? He is not yet born, or he is away from home. Maybe he is in Greenwich Village talking of formations, or copying his own fever-dreams. Ride among the sand-hills in the evening. Who has painted a sunset in Moore County? Nobody. Who will make it his business to speak to the brethren in the valley? Little men, big men, where are you hiding? . . . Who

has sung of our mountains? Spring or autumn, they cry for a voice. One Wordsworth among them would carry inspiration to millions before the curtain came down. Who tells the romance of the farmer's life among his tobacco, his cotton and corn? Nobody. And the negro and his life that was and is to be? I hear no answer. Or the great winter migration of John Smith and his family in search of a better home over there in Sampson or up in Harnett or down in Pender? Call the roll of the chosen ones. Who recounts the drama of the country doctor and his fight against ignorance and poverty, flies and dysentery and typhoid fever—his devotion to the needy in freeze and flood? Who has told his story? Nobody. And the matters of statecraft and politics, an epic tale of wisdom and gentleness, of cunning and graft, of bribery and dealings at the pie-counter? Where is our Balzac or Tolstoi or Hauptmann? Asleep or gone on a journey? The dinner bell rings, the house burns down, but no one comes. . . . It is too evident then that everywhere around us, both here and yonder, is work for willing hands to do, hands that will shape and build to the finer uses of a living art.

And The Carolina Playmakers are to be commemorated in that they have dedicated themselves to the uses of this living art. Let us go the way with them.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
June 19, 1928.

THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS

A Tragedy of the Lowrie Gang

By

William Norment Cox

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced by The Carolina Playmakers at Memorial Hall, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, December 4th and 5th, 1924.

HENRY BERRY LOWRIE, *chief of the Croatan Outlaws,* William Norment Cox
STEVE LOWRIE, *Henry Berry's brother,* Ted Wilson
RHODY, *Henry Berry's wife,* Louise Sawyer
JUNE, *Henry Berry's niece,* Frances Gray
LUKE LOCKLEAR, *a young Croatan,* Lawrence Wallace
JOHN SANDERS, *a white man from Nova Scotia,* Bob Proctor
JAMES MCQUEEN, alias DONAHOE, *a white man of Robeson County,* George Denny

SCENE: John Sanders' shanty, in Scuffletown, the settlement of the Croatan Outlaws. A swampy region of Robeson County, North Carolina.

TIME:

Scene 1. The evening of November 19th, 1870—about eight o'clock.
Scene 2. The early morning of November 21st.

THE SCENE

THE scene is JOHN SANDERS' *cabin in Scuffletown Swamp—the Croatan habitat. There is a barred door in the center of the rear wall, and to the left of it a small window with a solid board shutter. To the right, in the corner, is a cot piled with clothing, a knapsack, and other camp equipment. Down-stage on the right is a door, also securely barred. On the table in the center of the room are a Bible, several other books, and two guns. There are two splint-bottom chairs by the table. On the left down-stage is a rough fireplace made of sticks and red clay, with a hand-made bench in front of it. The room has a bare appearance as of hurried preparations for departure.*

The rising curtain reveals HENRY BERRY LOWRIE, STEVE LOWRIE, *and* JOHN SANDERS. HENRY BERRY *is about twenty-six years of age and five feet ten inches in height. He is a rugged man for his years—straight in the back, deep chested, his arms and shoulders well-set—a well-proportioned figure. His hazel-gray eyes dilate and flash when he is excited. A smile lights his face sometimes when he is quiet, but when he is aroused it becomes the smile of a demon. He is the clear-headed young leader of his tribe. He never betrays to his enemies his real feelings. His hair is straight and black, characteristic of the Croatan Indian. He wears*

calf skin boots, a woolen frock coat or blouse, breeches of the same material (or Salem or Kentucky jeans) and a wide-brimmed hat. He is seated by the table leisurely cleaning and wiping his Spencer rifle.

STEPHEN LOWRIE *is sitting by the fireplace, carelessly strumming his banjo. He has been drinking heavily and gazes sullenly into the fire.* STEVE LOWRIE *is six feet tall, thirty-four years of age, and weighs one hundred and seventy pounds. He has great muscular power and looks the Indian brigand more than any of the other members of the gang. He has heavy black hair and a dark thin moustache. The resentment of his race lurks in his eyes. He is the robber and the murderer who needs little provocation to kill his man.*

JOHN SANDERS *is a native of Nova Scotia. He has lived with the Croatans for two years as a missionary, healer and teacher. In this time he has won their confidence and their affection. He is a tall man, of winning manners, clear-blue, fearless eyes and alert mind —strikingly attractive in his blue homespun shirt, corduroy breeches, and calf-skin boots. He is busy packing up his outfit. He appears somewhat nervous and excited, but tries to conceal his anxiety under the show of preparations for the exodus. The room is lighted by the light-wood blaze from the fireplace and a single candle on the table.*

HENRY BERRY

Mon, when first ye come to our swamp-land and begun a-talkin' about movin' to that Texas place, I thought ye a fool.

SANDERS

I reckon you did, Henry, for it did sound foolish at first.

HENRY BERRY

But I sees it now, mon. We can escape by travelling at night an' takin' it easy during the heat of the day. Course I hates to go like this—looks like the Lowries is a-runnin'. That's what them domn whites'll say.

SANDERS

Let them say what they want to, Henry.

HENRY BERRY

(*Bitterly*)

Yes, let 'em. Mon, ye know that it hurts me to go like this. But we are fightin' the whole State now. Outlawed—price on me, ten thousand dollars dead or alive. And a big price set on Steve over thar—on every last one of us. An' I see with ye that this is the way out.

SANDERS

(*Nervously, tying up a bundle*)

Yes, Henry, I believe this will come out all right. And you ain't showing the white feather by leaving like this. Besides, think of where we are going. (*With a show of enthusiasm.*) To a land where we can live as we see fit. A land that is not ruled by court-martial trials.

HENRY BERRY

Court-martial trials! Yeh ho, mon, it were at a court-martial trial that they murdered my pa for takin' a barrel o' molasses—killed him for takin' a barrel o' sweetenin'. Mon, that sweet killin' ha'e been as bitter as gall-berries to them what done it. Spite of that, we ain't gettin' nowheres. I'm ready to leave it all behind. I feels kind o' happy on my last night in Scuffletown.

STEVE

(*Breaking in*)

Me, too, mon. Hurrah for Texas! Domn Robeson County!

(STEVE *has been striking meaningless chords on his banjo. His instrument seems to be out of tune. He strokes it carelessly, not paying much attention to the conversation.*)

Kind o' hate to slip off in the night like a domn sheriffs' force though.

HENRY BERRY

(*Going up to him*)

Steve, quit yo' thumpin' that thing. Mon, I believe ye're drunk again. An' this night o' all nights for ye to be a-drinkin'. We need live men for the start, Steve; and you know it. (*He turns to* SANDERS.) Mon, see if ye can fix for him some o' that thar drink ye sober him up with.

SANDERS

Good. There's a little left, I think. (*He mixes a drink. The bottles on the fireplace are easily reached, because they are often used.*) Here you go, Steve, drink it down; it will make you feel better.

(STEVE *drains the gourd dipper without changing his expression.*)

STEVE

(*Dully*)

Mon, I'm all right.

HENRY BERRY

That's good. (*To* SANDERS.) Mon, brother Steve owes ye a lot on account o' what ye done for him during his drinkin' spells.

STEVE

Henry, I'm all right, I tell ye. Dunno be all lickered. I was thinkin' how much I'd give for one more shot at that domn Donahoe. Just one more, afore we leave.

HENRY BERRY

It's too late now, Steve. But, mon, let me tell ye, just one more shot at Donahoe, and he'd bleed.

STEVE

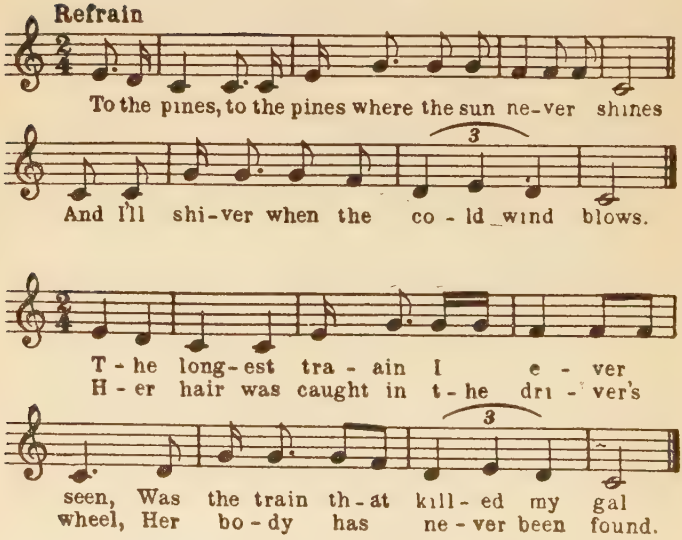
(*Now more mentally and physically alert*)

Luck ha'e been agin me with that mon. Everything

bein' ready to leave when the moon sets, think I'll strike ye up a tune or two afore we go.

(*The meanest and most bloodthirsty of the Lowrie is lost for the time being in the plaintive melody of an old ballad.*)

To The Pines



(HENRY BERRY *and* SANDERS *go on cleaning their guns while* STEVE *is singing. At the conclusion of the song* STEVE *goes to the window, throws open the shutter, and peers out into the swamp.*)

HENRY BERRY

(*Rebuking him and closing the shutter*)

Steve, ye domn fool, shut that thar window. Old Donahoe's rifle will bark out thar in the night and ye won't be a-goin' to Texas.

STEVE

(*Going back to the fireplace*)

An' what'll they be a-sayin' when we do go off to Texas?

HENRY BERRY

Dunno be no help for what they'll say, Steve. Dunno do no good to think about what they'll have to say.

STEVE

Domn 'em! They'll say we run—like women.

SANDERS

(*Cheerfully*)

Oh, it won't matter what they say after we get there. And it won't be long before nine o'clock will be on us. (*To* HENRY BERRY.) And you are sure that everything is ready?

HENRY BERRY

Yes, everything is ready, Sanders.

SANDERS

Have all the wagons been greased?

HENRY BERRY

Yes, every one o' them is fixed right. There's a-plenty o' feed for the mules—everything is ready.

SANDERS

What about my share of the grease for my wagon?

HENRY BERRY

Time Rhody and Luke's here with it now.

SANDERS

(*Nervously*)

Who you got out watching the roads to-night, Henry?

HENRY BERRY

That's all fixed, mon. Don't ye worry about that.

STEVE

We got 'em watched all right. Thar's William Chavis down by the crick bridge, an' George Applewhite is a-watchin' the big road to come this way. Brother Tom's over to Red Banks station to see if some of them domn deputies from Lumberton gits off the train.

(*Footsteps are heard outside.* STEVE and HENRY BERRY *seize their guns, spring to their feet, and stand ready to fire. A signal of three short whistles is heard.*)

HENRY BERRY

Hit's Rhody and Luke.

(HENRY BERRY *answers the signal and* STEVE *opens the door.*)

STEVE

Come in.

(RHODY *and* LUKE *enter.* RHODY LOWRIE *is the wife of the robber chief,* HENRY BERRY LOWRIE. *Her figure and countenance mark her as somewhat older than her years. She is dressed poorly, but wears a bright-colored shawl about her shoulders. There is something in her voice which reveals the constant anxiety of her existence and a stoic attitude toward life.*)

RHODY

Everything with us is ready for the start far as I know. (*Turning coldly to* SANDERS.) Here's your grease, mon.

(*Going to the fireplace she sits there silently, betraying no emotion.* STEVE *closes the door after* RHODY *and* LUKE, *and bars it.*)

SANDERS

Well, I'd better grease my wagon right now. Can any of you help me?

HENRY BERRY

Come on, Steve, we can holp him.

SANDERS

(*To* LUKE)

Here, lad. Sit down by the fire with Rhody and rest a bit.

(*As they leave* HENRY BERRY *warns them.*)

HENRY BERRY

An' keep that window shut.

RHODY

(*Darkly*)

Hit may be a good thing, but I fear it. Who knows what may happen on the road to Texas, and that mon Sanders a-leadin' o' us. Boy, don't ye never trust a white mon—never, I tell ye.

LUKE

(LUKE LOCKLEAR *is a fearless young outlaw-in-the-making. A handsome tall lad of eighteen, of keen and bright eye and graceful bearing. He is in love with* JUNE LOWRIE, HENRY BERRY'S *niece.*)

I ha'e watched him. I ha'e trailed him like a hound-dog, and I aims to keep on his trail. He ain't a-lyin', Aunt Rho'; he means to take us some place far away. Uncle Henry and the rest ain't blind.

RHODY

I dunno be sure, Luke. I dunno know.

LUKE

Hit dunno be the plan, Aunt Rho'. . . . I—I could kill the mon like a moccasin for a-comin' betwixt June and me. But I can't do hit. I can't do hit, 'cause Uncle Henry and Steve and all of 'em don't put no faith in what I think.

RHODY

Boy, I ha'e argued for ye. But June won't listen to me lak she used to. She aims to marry him when we gits to Texas (*doubtfully*)—if we ever git thar. God help 'em. A Lowrie a-marryin' a white mon!

(*A low whistle is heard outside.* LUKE *answers the signal.*)

LUKE

Hit's June, Aunt Rho'.

(LUKE *goes to the door, unbars it, and lets her in.*)

JUNE

(JUNE LOWRIE *is a Croatan girl. She is well formed and fair to look upon, just turned twenty. Her eyes are dark, her skin is smooth and firm. In the sordid background of a Scuffletown cabin she appears fresh, clear and lovely. She wears a scarlet swamp flower in her hair. There is a wistful quality in her voice which is gentle and low—in marked contrast with the abrupt staccato speech of the men and of her* AUNT RHODY.)

We ha'e everything ready to leave over our way and

I thought I'd run over and see if I could help John pack some of his things. (*Looking around the room.*) But he's pretty nigh got his house cleaned out.

LUKE

Yes, and he don't need your holp. No white mon does.

JUNE

(*Fiercely, her eyes shining*)
He needs my holp and I'm goin' to he'p him, too.

LUKE

Well, he'p him then if ye want to, and domn ye for it. But it's agin your blood—and him a white mon!

(*He goes out, slamming the door.* JUNE *bars it.*)

RHODY

June, thar goes the best boy in Scuffletown—and him a Locklear, too. Luke would be good to ye, lass, and ye dunno do right by throwin' him off.

JUNE

But, Aunt Rho', I love John. He will be good to me, too. But that good part don't make so powerful much difference. I love the mon—here. (*Placing her hand over her heart.*)

RHODY

Lass, ye dunno know white people lak I do.

JUNE

But, Aunt Rho', John is the same as one o' us.

RHODY

(*Bitterly*)

If ye had been with us in that cold and damp jail in Lumberton ye would not be for a-lovin' any white mon. They thought they'd take Steve's wife, and Boss Strong's wife, and me—Henry Berry Lowrie's wife—an' all the wives from Scuffletown, and make our men stop takin' what they wanted and a-killin' them what was a-huntin' of 'em. Hit did no' work. I would ha'e kilt myself if Henry Berry had give up on account of my bein' in jail.—Bless God, no Lowrie has ever touched a white woman!—An' ye go agin your blood, lass, when ye talk o' marryin' this white mon. I dunno trust none of 'em, in spite of what the rest thinks. I dunno forget them nights in that jail, with them cold iron bars a-shadowin' on the wall. An' who knows but what he's a-settin' to ketch us—him a-comin' away down here from that Nova Scotia place.

JUNE

(*Soothing her*)

But, Aunt Rho', ye dunno forget, too, how gentle and kind John has been to all o' us these two years he's been here. He's doctored us for fever, tended the men when they were shot up, and held preachin' for us every Sunday—and all kinds o' things for us he's done. 'Twas a lucky day, I tell ye, for Scuffletown

when John Sanders was found out'n his head with swamp-fever, and I brung him back to health. (*She takes up* SANDERS' *coat from the chair and fondles it.*) An' I love him, Aunt Rho'. I love him, I tells ye!

RHODY

(*Despairing*)

I understand what ye say, lass; but the day will come when my words'll sound like buryin' hymns to ye! I dunno be able to trust the mon like ye do. (*She rises.*) I must go home now, so as to be good an' ready for that nine-o'clock leavin' time. There don't seem no sense in a-arguin' with ye.

JUNE

(*Calling after her*)

I'll be along in a little while, Aunt Rho'.

(*Alone in the cabin,* JUNE LOWRIE *remains seated by the fireplace. She is gazing intently at the smouldering coals when* JOHN SANDERS *enters. She goes to meet him.*)

SANDERS

Hello, June. I thought you had gone.

JUNE

No, John, that was Aunt Rho'. I just thought I'd stay a little bit longer. You don't care if I do, do ye?

SANDERS

You should be at home resting. Didn't I tell you

to get all the rest you could? The road to Texas is hard and treacherous and you should rest now as much as possible.

JUNE

I know that's what ye said, and I love ye John for a-sayin' it; but I couldn't keep from comin' over just for a minute.

SANDERS

Well, young lady, if you love me so much you had better obey me. (*He goes on with his preparations for the leaving.*) I know what's best for you.

JUNE

(*Coquettishly*)

You dunno be able to make me go right now. Let me stay just a little while, John. I'll no' be in the way.

SANDERS

Oh, all right. Make yourself at home.

(SANDERS *goes on with his packing.* JUNE *watches him closely—happy to be near him.*)

JUNE

John, where's Uncle Henry and Steve? Ain't they a-comin', too?

SANDERS

They've gone on down to their wagons to see that everything's ready for the start.

(*There is a moment of silence.*)

JUNE

John, we be all by ourselves. . . . Won't you do something for me?

SANDERS

June, you know I would do anything for you.

JUNE

John, tell me more about that wonderful country we be a-goin' to—that country where everything is peaceful and happy, where there will be no more killin' and a-robbin' of folks. Where Uncle Henry and the rest can go to town without fear o' bein' arrested. Where the babes and the chillun can play and laugh knowin' that their pas will come home to the cabin of a night. Oh, John—John! It's good to dream about that country. It makes me believe on that hymn ye taught us to sing on Sundays. "Thar is a happy land, fur, fur away!" Mon, I tell ye one of them miracles is about to happen. Seems jus' lak one o' them you used to preach of.

SANDERS

Yes, June, it is a good country, and a free land. Texas is as big as half a dozen of our states out here. There will be plenty of land for everybody. We can begin at the bottom and build the Croatan nation over again. This trouble will be forgotten in a few years. The sun will shine on us to-morrow—I know it will, June.

JUNE

An', John, ye'll marry me when we get there; an' we can grow old together in that young country.

SANDERS

Yes, June, we'll marry when we get there.

JUNE

John, if ye knew how happy it makes me to hear ye say that, ye wouldn't ever stop sayin' it.

SANDERS

But you must run along home now, June, and try to rest. This escape is mighty serious business, and I must finish the packing right now.

JUNE

I dunno want to go—but I will since ye say to. (*Lightly.*) I'll see ye at Uncle Henry's, John.

SANDERS

(*Following her to the door,* SANDERS *impetuously draws her to him.*)

June, I love you, girl. Tell me, would you always love me . . . even if something terrible should happen?

JUNE

(*Quietly*)

Mon, I will love ye forever and ever—it matters not what happens.

SANDERS

(*He kisses her*)

Go on, child; go on. . . .

(JUNE *leaves and* JOHN *is alone. Now he appears tired and worried—unsettled in his mind. A sudden tapping at the side door interrupts his thinking. He listens. Again the tapping. He walks stealthily to the door and gives a signal. It is answered and he opens the door, admitting* DONAHOE. JAMES MCQUEEN, *alias* DONAHOE, *is a tall, eccentric figure—a gaunt "gawky Scotchman," swift and sure in every movement he makes. Each looks inquiringly at the other.* SANDERS *bolts both doors. Then* DONAHOE *strides to the center of the room and speaks.*)

DONAHOE

(*In a repressed voice*)

Everything all right, John?

SANDERS

Yes, I think so—not much danger. They all left a few minutes ago. They won't be back soon. Make yourself comfortable.

(SANDERS *pours out a glass of whiskey, which* DONAHOE *accepts gratefully.*)

DONAHOE

Thank'ee, lad; that tastes good! This business of

crawling through Scuffletown swamp like a snake calls for some kind of a nerve settler.

SANDERS

I don't see how you do it, Donahoe. You must be a ghost. God knows they hate you since you killed Boss Strong. You run in Steve Lowrie's mind all the time.

DONAHOE

An' he runs in mine, the dirty skunk! I'd love to shoot him.—I don't want to see him hung like he will be when we catch 'im. (*A pause.*) Is everything all right, John?

SANDERS

Yes, I reckon so. . . .

DONAHOE

We got our end fixed all right.

SANDERS

(*Evasively*)

Have you?

DONAHOE

Oh, yes. You can count on us. Tell you what we done. We got Wishart's Company, all the sheriff's force from Lumberton, and all the good shots from up Philadelphus way and tried them bridges the other day just to make sure. An' it'll work! You see, some of our men will be under the bridge on scaffolds fixed for it; the rest will be on the dam at both ends; you all

drive on the bridge, and we'll close in and catch every damn one of 'em!

SANDERS

(*Vaguely*)

Sounds all right, Donahoe.

DONAHOE

Yes, by God, and it is all right. (*In his enthusiasm his voice rises and* SANDERS *cautions him to speak more quietly.*) We got 'em now (*grimly*)—the rusty swamp-devils. They'll never git away alive if our boys surround 'em. Tell you what you can do, Sanders. Try to call Henry Berry and Steve and the other leaders up to the head wagon for a conference about the time you git to the bridge. They'll be easy to catch up there.

SANDERS

(*Evasively*)

All right. . . .

DONAHOE

I bring ye good news, lad. The Governor has raised them rewards. You stand to clean up nigh on to $52,000.00 on this deal. God knows you deserve every penny of it for what you've been doing here. And I want to shake hands with the bravest man in North Carolina—no—in the United States! (*He offers* SANDERS *his hand, but* SANDERS *does not accept*

it.) Oh, come on, John. I mean it, and there ain't no use beatin' 'round the bush.

SANDERS

(*Slowly, with determination*)

Donahoe, I can't shake hands with you on this deal.

DONAHOE

Why, what's the matter, John? Seems to me you ought to be the happiest man in Robeson County.

SANDERS

(*Walking away from him*)

But I'm not happy. I'm miserable. Donahoe, you call me a brave man. I tell you I'd rather be called the biggest coward in the world and have this thing off my hands. (*Resolved.*) I don't believe I can see it through.

DONAHOE

(*Amazed*)

What do you mean about not seein' it through?

SANDERS

Man, you won't be able to understand it when I tell you. For two long years I have lived here with these people. I know the atrocities they have committed. I know things they have done that you will never know. You should go to their cabins as I have done, when their men are away hiding in the Swamp, and see their wives and little ones—wild-eyed, nervous, unable to

sleep—listening, eternally listening, for the sound of a gun somewhere far off in the swamps. They can't understand it. The white people tramped on them and they had to strike back in their own way. I've lived with 'em, doctored 'em, taught them—and they have come to put a damning trust in me, in everything.

DONAHOE

John, have you gone crazy? What does this mean?

SANDERS

(*Firmly*)

Donahoe, I mean, that with God as my judge, I swear to you I can't see this thing through. (*He takes from the Bible on the table a faded photograph and observes it intently.*) How could I ever face my wife and children—and me a traitor. . . . Donahoe, man is a queer mixture.—God knows how I can face them anyhow.—What's $50,000.00 for selling the lives of men who trust me as they have never trusted a white man before.

DONAHOE

(*Facing him*)

Sanders, I warn ye not to put any confidence in their trust.

SANDERS

You don't know, Donahoe. Even their suspicious women trust me. There is one girl, June Lowrie—that girl loves me. I began by playing with her so as to make everything run smooth for me in Scuffletown.

One little slip and I would have been a dead man. . . . Donahoe, what would you think of me if I told you that I love that girl?

DONAHOE

Good God, man! You are crazy!

SANDERS

(*Pacing up and down restlessly*)

Maybe I am, but I can't help it. I hate to think about it. My two years here make me appreciate affection even from what you call "a damn Croatan."

DONAHOE

Man, don't talk to me about Croatan affection. How much would your trust be worth to Steve Lowrie? I know, and you know, that they would kill you like a dog if they knew what you were doing.

SANDERS

I don't believe they would, Donahoe. They have a keener sense of justice than you give them credit for. I can better stand the wrath and ridicule of North Carolina than to be forever tormented by a guilty conscience. (*Decisively.*) I can't see this thing through.

DONAHOE

(*Advancing to him*)

John, I've listened to all this talk. You must be out of your head. I know it has been a great strain on ye, but try to buck up, mon.

SANDERS

(*Resolved*)

Donahoe, I stand by what I told you, so help me, God!

DONAHOE

(*Challenging him*)

John, have you forgotten the eleven good and honest citizens that these hellions have murdered? Those men they waited on in ambush and blowed their heads off with buckshot? Tell me, have you?

SANDERS

No. . . .

DONAHOE

Have you forgotten so soon Owen Norment, who was shot down in his front yard, with his wife and children looking on and pleading for mercy? Old Sheriff King; they murdered him by his own fireside. Old man Barnes, shot down on his own mill dam. You know all this, Sanders. It's true, isn't it?

SANDERS

(*Evading him*)

Yes, but . . .

DONAHOE

Look at the terrified district—white men can't move from their firesides for fear of bein' shot down. White women and children pray that God Almighty'll take care of them through the night—and you talk like this.

SANDERS

Well. . . .

DONAHOE

(*Rebuking him*)

And the whole country is laughing at us—saying that the people of Robeson County are cowards. You can't pick up a newspaper but has something to say about the cold-footed North Carolina people who let a handful of Indians run wild, murdering and robbing. Well, you know it takes more than talking and even fighting to clean out this gang.—That's the reason we got you, John Sanders.—Tod Caldwell has power as Governor to clean out the gang for us; but he ain't helping any. The Freedmen's Bureau is helping *them;* the Republican troops what was here has helped 'em. You admit this, don't you?

SANDERS

(*Weakening*)

Well, yes. . . .

DONAHOE

Sanders, you've done more by yourself toward ridding the earth of this running sore than all the rest of us put together. Think, man, of the suffering you will rid this country of when your plans go through. —I'm Presbyterian, I am, an' it seems to me that the good Master sent you here to do your work. You've done it well, lad. You deserve—

SANDERS

Don't tell me that again.

DONAHOE

I know how you feel, boy. Brace up. . . . We'll be waitin' for ye.

SANDERS

(*Resigned*)

I'll do what I can.

DONAHOE

(*His hand on* SANDERS' *shoulder*)

Mon, I knowed all the time you was troubled by the strain. You are doing the right thing, and a great thing, for mankind.—We'll be on the bridge. I'll tell the boys that our troubles will soon be over. Guess you'll be along about three o'clock?

SANDERS

If nothing happens. . . .

DONAHOE

Well, good luck, boy; and God guide ye.

(*He gives* SANDERS *a warm hand-shake, and slips out by the side door of the shack.* SANDERS *sits down by the table, deeply troubled.* LUKE LOCKLEAR, *who has been spying outside, now opens the shutter softly, and peers in. He watches* SANDERS *take up the photograph, study it intently, and place it in his bosom; then take*

a sheet of paper from the table, write something hurriedly on it, and leave it by the Bible. Then, with a last look about the walls of the cabin LUKE *sees him sling a bundle over his shoulder and go out hurriedly by the side door.*

LUKE LOCKLEAR *now slips in at the rear door as stealthily as a cat. He goes swiftly to the table, takes up the written paper—but he cannot make it out. He looks puzzled, places the paper in his shirt and hurries out as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

Scene from *The Scuffletown Outlaws,* a tragedy of the Lowrie Gang, by William Norment Cox. HENRY BERRY LOWRIE (William Norment Cox, THE AUTHOR); JOHN SANDERS (Bob Proctor); STEVE LOWRIE (Ted Wilson).

HENRY BERRY: Mon, I got ye! I got ye afore ye could git away with your lyin', dirty scheme.

to close his domn eyes.—Mon, I kin see ye a-bleedin' on every bush betwixt here an' your stoppin' place—a-bleedin' and a-sweatin' drops o' blood.

RHODY

(*Sullenly*)

I dunno trust no white mon.

HENRY BERRY

I tol' Steve to bring him here for me to make up my mind about what to do with him afore I turns him over to the rest of 'em for trial. They ought to be here with 'im by this. (*Outside footsteps, guttural commands, and the clanking of guns are heard.*) They're here, Rhody. (*He goes to the door.*) Woman, ye'll stand over thar (*pointing to the fireplace*) an' dunno move your tongue.

(STEVE *and* LUKE *enter with* SANDERS. *He is bound and bleeding, and nearly exhausted. He reels and sinks to the floor.* STEVE *and* LUKE *kick at him viciously, and jerk him to his feet.*)

STEVE

Stand up, ye son-of-a—

HENRY BERRY

(*Sternly*)

Mon, if ye ha'e strength in ye to breathe, ye ha'e strength enough to stand up and hear what I ha'e to tell ye. Stand up!—for Henry Berry Lowrie—afore

I nails ye to that wall with hickory pegs. (SANDERS *braces himself with a frantic effort, and stands erect.*) Mon, I got ye! I got ye afore ye could git away with your lyin', dirty scheme. An' till now I ha'e not decided what to do with ye; but I ha'e some notion what it'll be.

STEVE

(*Casually*)

Ye'll remember, Henry, how ol' mon Norment looked when Jack McLaurin blowed his jaw off'n him with them number ten buck-shot.

(RHODY *and* LUKE *nod agreement, but* HENRY BERRY *continues calmly.*)

HENRY BERRY

Mon, for two year ha'e I been fooled into trustin' ye. I trusted ye with things that the others'll never know. I thought ye my friend, a-workin' to help me and the rest, when every other domn white mon was a-workin' to kill us. Mon, ye ha'e been brave, but the brave mon most times gits shot.

RHODY

I dunno lak to hear ye speak so, Henry.

HENRY BERRY

Woman, you keep quiet, I tell ye. (*To* SANDERS.) Mon, I hate to see ye there a-whimperin' and a-shiverin' like a cur-dog. Hit's your own doin' though, and I reckon ye kin stand it. What do ye mean o' this?

(*He reads the note* SANDERS *had left behind him, studying his face intently as he does so.*) "Good-bye, good friends. Don't follow plans made for to-night and you will be safe from any danger." What do ye mean by that?

SANDERS

(*With great effort*)

For God's sake, Henry . . . let me tell you. . . .

HENRY BERRY

I tol' ye to speak, mon.

SANDERS

(*Breathing hard*)

I . . . I . . . I came here with a plan for capturing you and the whole Lowrie gang. You know I don't belong to this part of the country . . . and I swear to you that I came all the way from Nova Scotia . . . just for the rewards. I . . . I had you in my power to-night. . . . I could have sold you to the white people of this section . . . for $50,000.00 . . . but I couldn't do it. . . . My two years here with you have made me understand your true feelings so much that on this very night I couldn't see it through . . . Before God, I swear that I'm telling you the truth—I am. . . .

(*He is about to sink exhausted to the floor.*)

STEVE

(*Forcing him to his feet again*)

Mon, ye'll stand up, if ye know what's good for ye.

SANDERS

God have mercy. . . .

HENRY BERRY

Don't call on God, mon. Little holp he will ha'e for ye now. 'Tis better you waste your cryin' on me—'twill do ye more good than a thousand a-prayin' for your soul.

RHODY

Ye speak the truth, Henry.

HENRY BERRY

(*Speaking calmly and coldly*)

Let me tell ye. One day I went to my fish-box in Drowning Creek to git some fish for Rhody, and one pore little perch had his head all e't away and his fins gone—a jack-fish done it. I can see ye, mon, with your head gone and your body a-bleedin' and a-drippin' lak a stuck hog— One day, while I was a-watchin' McNeill's dam by myself, I saw a king snake squeeze the life out'n a moccasin. He wropped himself around the other snake and he squeezed, and he squeezed till he mashed the life out'n that moccasin.—Mon, let me tell ye, I could do thot for ye with my own hands and I— (*The door is opened suddenly, and* JUNE *rushes in.*) June, you go home. You—

JUNE

(*Rushing to* SANDERS *she helps him into the chair.*)

I know ye tol' me to stay home, Uncle Henry, but

I couldn't do it. I had to come. I stayed outside and listened as long as I could stand it; and I tell ye I had to come in. (*Observing* SANDERS' *weakened condition.*) Get me some water quick! (*No one responds. She gets the water herself and lifts the gourd dipper to* JOHN SANDERS' *lips.*) Doesn't that feel better? (SANDERS *can only look at her, gratefully.*)

STEVE

June, why don't you keep your domn mouth shut and go home where you belong?

JUNE

(*Fiercely*)

I hear you, Steve; and I ain't goin'. Can't you see he's too weak to talk for himself. He tried to tell you, but ye wouldn't hear him.

RHODY

(*Grimly*)

He's had too much of a chance already.

JUNE

I'm goin' to speak for him.—You, Steve, what's he done for you? How many times has he saved your life when you were too drunk to move? How many times has he gi'e you medicine to sober you up so you could go to Back Swamp and hide, when the deputies were hot on your trail? How many times, I ask ye? —You, too, Uncle Henry. (*Her voice changes; she speaks with a tone of respect.*) He's been a help to

ye; 'cause look how many times he's advised ye about what to do. I know, Uncle Henry, that you are too wise and too brave to ever be caught, but you know what he's done for the rest of the men. (*She turns fiercely now on* LUKE, *with a sneer.*) You, Luke, where'd you be if John Sanders hadn't been here when you broke your leg over at Brown's Grist Mill. Ye'd be walkin' on a wooden peg right now! (*To* RHODY, *reproachingly.*) And you, Aunt Rhody, what did he do for you when you was down with chills and fever? Ye remember how ye tol' us all good-bye, and how ye was ready to die, and John saved you.

RHODY

I dunno trust him in spite of it.

JUNE

(*Pleading*)

I ask all of you to think of the good things he has done for all of us. He has been a guardian angel for Scuffletown for two long years, and now you talk of killin' him.

HENRY BERRY

But I tell ye, he betrayed *me.*

JUNE

But, Uncle Henry, you know that nothing has hurt us for what he has done.

HENRY BERRY

Yes, June . . . that's the truth. But he ain't what

we thought he was, and no white man can be. It's just like a great river a-tween us. Them over thar on the one side and us over here on the other. And there ain't no endin' to it but by killin'. (*Gravely.*) An' killin's don't end nothin' neither. (*A pause, then he turns quickly to* SANDERS.) Mon, I gi'e ye six hours to be out'n this territory. If ye're no out by then, and if I ever see ye or hear of ye in Scuffletown again —God help your soul!

SANDERS

(*Dazed*)

You mean . . . I can . . . go? . . . Free? . . . Thanks. . . .

HENRY BERRY

(*Indicating the door*)

Go, go! Don't thank me. Go, I tell ye!

JUNE

(*Rushing up to* SANDERS)

And I'm goin' with ye.

SANDERS

No, no. . . .

JUNE

I am.

HENRY BERRY

Go! Go!

LUKE

(*Flashing out*)

Who you goin' with?

JUNE

You know who I'm goin' with.

LUKE

You wouldn't go if ye knowed what I know. I ain't tol' ye all there is to know, yet.

JUNE

What do you mean?

LUKE

(*His eyes flashing*)

I mean that he's been a-lyin' and a-foolin' ye. He's been betrayin' ye all along. He tol' ye he loved ye, and he promised to marry ye, jus' so's he could stay on the good side of Uncle Henry.

JUNE

(*Savagely*)

You're a domned liar, Luke Locklear!

LUKE

I ain't neither: I know.

JUNE

How do you know?

LUKE

He's married, and he's got two chilluns—that's how I know!—Last night I crawled up to that thar window just in time to see him a-lookin' at a picture, and

a-talkin' to himself.—Wish to God I had knowed it were Donahoe I seed goin' down the path. I thought it was one of our folks.—(*Crossing over to* SANDERS, *he draws out the photograph from his shirt bosom, and hands it to* JUNE.) And here it is for ye to see for yourself!

(JUNE *snatches the picture and stares at it fixedly for a moment. Her expression changes. She is puzzled, hurt, afraid. Then she goes slowly over to* SANDERS *and hands the photograph to him.*)

JUNE

(*Quietly*)

Will ye tell them what this is? Whose picture is this? What are they to ye?

LUKE

(*Savagely*)

It belongs to him—they're his wife and chillun. That's what they are.

JUNE

(*Still very calm*)

Is it so? Is this your picture? Does this be your wife and chillun?

SANDERS

(*Erect. He speaks quietly and firmly*)

Yes . . . they are mine . . . my own!

JUNE

(*Transformed. Her eyes burn with the hate of the diamond-back when he is about to strike. Her face is set, motionless as a mask shadowing a presentiment of tragic fury.*)

HENRY BERRY

(*Grimly*)

My word stands; ye can leave, mon.

JUNE

(*Coldly*)

Then, go! Get out of my sight, ye white trash, with your lyin', dirty heart! (*She walks slowly to the table, takes up a large knife she finds there and fondles it distractedly.*) I could cut it out o' ye, mon, just like ye cut the heart of a melon . . . but I don't want to see how filthy it is. . . . I want to kill ye so bad, it makes my heart ache. (*She hesitates a moment, then goes up behind him, and—cuts his bonds.*) Go, you white Judas!

(SANDERS *staggers out. There is a pause.*)

HENRY BERRY

I dunno be sure whether I done the right thing or no.

JUNE

Uncle Henry, I pray that God Almighty'll strike him dead, afore he goes a hundred yards! (STEVE *on the instant, takes up the rifle, throws open the shutter*

and takes aim to shoot. JUNE, *seeing this, fiercely springs at him and shrieks out.)* No! No!! No!!! (*But* STEVE LOWRIE *has pushed her aside. He takes a careful aim and fires to kill.* JUNE LOWRIE *stands staring blankly as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE CROATAN DIALECT

In preparing the text of *The Scuffletown Outlaws* the aim of the Editor has been to preserve the natural speech as far as that is possible. The spelling of the dialect has been simplified as much as is practicable, without destroying the local characteristics of the language.

It is difficult to represent the spoken dialect in print. Below is a list of words, commonly used by the Croatans, which will be of interest to the reader and serve the actor as a guide in the pronunciation.

Man, Can, That, Damn, Land, Swamp, Stand, are pronounced
Măn, Căn, Thăt, Dămn, Lăndt, Swămp, Stănd.
Time, Strike, Right, are pronounced
Toime, Stroike, Roight.
There, Where, Here, are pronounced
Thär, Whär, Hyär.

Do not / Don't know	Dunno
Plenty	Plain-tee
Brother	Bruvver
Mean	Māne
Liquor	Licker
Leave	Lāve
Because	Becāze
Onion	Inyun
Creek	Crĭck
("Swamp" is often used)	
Woman	o͝oman
Fire	Făr
Help (noun)	Hōlp
Help (verb) present	Hĕp
past	Hōlp
Wagon	Waggin
Window	Winder
Afraid	Afeard
Between	Betwixt
Bring	Fetch
Carry	Tote
Sack, or Bag	Wallet (of meal)
Marry	Merry
Argue	Argy
Good	Go͝ot

JOB'S KINFOLKS

A Play of the Mill People

By

Loretto Carroll Bailey

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced at The Playmakers Theatre, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 10 and 11, 1928.

KIZZIE, *the grandmother,*	Loretto Carroll Bailey
KATE, *the mother,*	Noel Walker
KATHERINE, *the daughter, aged 14,*	Lois Warden
ESTELLE, *a neighbor,*	Helen Dortch
CARL ROGERS, *a mill worker,*	Moore Bryson

SCENE: The living-room of the Meadows' home in the mill section of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
TIME: Twilight of an evening in early spring.

THE SCENE

IT is thick dusk in the room where old KIZZIE *sits by the window and "moons." A little light, perhaps from the street lamp, outlines her softly against the darkness; her head against the chair-tidy, her body drooping against the deep curves of the rocker, her starched gray skirt billowing out around her feet, her hands spread out stiffly on her white apron. Outside, two feet from the window, which is at the rear of the room, the blank brick wall of the church next door shuts away the street and the light. From somewhere beyond the wall the strains of the first prayer-meeting hymn come faintly—"Pass me not, O Gentle Savior."* KIZZIE *is thinking way back yonder, long before she came to town. It is big-meetin' time. Morning preaching's over and folks are spreading their dinners in the spring lot. The man schoolteacher makes lemonade in a wash-tub. The young folks fight over the water bucket. The spring lot is running over with young folks.* KIZZIE *sighs. Young folks don't go to church like they used to—all old'uns singin' next door. Nothin' left to the old folks but trouble.*

The light gleams on the "Rock of Ages" picture to the right of the window—a girl in a flowing white robe, clinging to a cross while a perilous green sea

clutches at her. Beneath the picture, the once bright cretonnes of the day-bed seem faded and dull. Behind KIZZIE'S *chair, to the left, the pine bureau, with its sea-shells and gay little bottles, is a dim shape in the corner. The light glances from the surface of the alarm clock somewhere on it. In the center of the room (a little to the right) a round, blue-covered table stands out clearly from the shadows. Its little bunch of crêpe-paper poppies looks dried and dusty.*

A light wind stirs the curtains and the white stockings that are drying in the window. An old calendar flaps against the wall at the right. KIZZIE *nods a little. Sleep comes easier than it used to. Some one raps heavily at the hall door, to the right, and* KIZZIE *sits up with a start.*

KIZZIE

Who is it?

(*The door opens, and the figure of a short, stocky, young man comes just inside the room.*)

CARL

I didn't mean to wake you, Mis' Kizzie. Just wanted to ask you if Katherine's come in yet?

KIZZIE

(*Evidences that she has been crying creep into her voice*)

No, she ain't, Mr. Rogers, but I'm a-lookin' for her any time now. Her mother's due to be in from the

mill, too. Won't you set awhile? Just turn on the light by the switch there.

(CARL *does not turn on the light, but it streams in from the hall.*)

CARL

No, ma'am, I can't stay. I reckon I'll go on upstairs. When Katherine comes, ask her to call me. I'll be up there in my room, an' I want her to go with me to the show.

KIZZIE

(*Rising*)

Better ast her to go with you to church, Mr. Rogers. It's prayer-meetin' night.

CARL

(*Embarrassed*)

Yeah. Reckon I ort—but she wouldn't want to go. They's a Gloria Swanson picture on at the Broadway, and she's crazy about Gloria.

KIZZIE

(*Sighing*)

No. I guess she wouldn't go if you was to ast her. We been livin' here by this church a many a year, and she and her mother has got so they don't hardly set foot in it no more.

CARL

No, ma'am. (*He hesitates.*) I reckon Katherine

don't think much more of me than she does of meetin', does she?

KIZZIE

She ain't nothin' but a baby, Mr. Rogers, an' she ain't never had a daddy, nor a brother to he'p her be easy with menfolks.

CARL

(*He has come well into the room by this time, and now he turns away, sullenly*)

She 'pears to be easy enough with some of 'em. (KIZZIE *is silent.*) Looks like you or her mother could put in a good word for me sometimes, as much money as I've loaned you.

KIZZIE

I do, Mr. Rogers, I do, and that's the Gospel truth. She ain't plumb turned agin you.

CARL

She shore acts like it sometimes. Well, I'll be a-goin' on up to my room.

KIZZIE

All right, Mr. Rogers. I'll tell her when she comes. (*She sits down in the rocker again, her forehead resting against her hand. Once she wipes her eyes. Through the half-open door* CARL *may be heard talking with* KATE.)

CARL

Howdy, Mis' Meadows.

KATE

Hello, Carl.

CARL

I was just askin' Mis' Kizzie for a date with Katherine this evenin'.

KATE

I reckon she'll go with you all right.

CARL

Thank you, ma'am.

(KATE *comes in and closes the hall door after her. She is a slender, dark-skinned woman between thirty-five and forty years old. She has been very pretty once, perhaps charming. Now she is a little worn, defeated, and defiant. She is shabbily, but not untastefully, dressed.* KATE *snaps on the light, and the old woman looks up at her and then away.* KATE *stares at her angrily, and when she speaks her voice is petulant.*)

KATE

What are you settin' here in the dark for, a-moonin'? Why don't you turn on the light?

KIZZIE

I wasn't doin' nothin' but settin' here. Every lit-

tle bit he'ps save. I reckon a body can set without the lights on if she's a mind to.

KATE

(*Flinging her hat and coat on the couch with a quick, nervous movement*)

Mamma, I wish you wouldn't act like that. It sure is hard to work all day as hard as I can tear and then come home and find you snivellin' in the dark. It sure is.

KIZZIE

(*Getting up*)

I'm sorry I can't keep from cryin' when I'm hurt.

KATE

What's the matter with you now?

KIZZIE

Rent man come a-huntin' his money again to-day.

KATE

Well, if I ain't got it, I ain't got it. No use to get upset about that.

KIZZIE

That ain't all. That Welfare Worker woman come here again to-day to see you.

KATE

(*Angrily*)

She did! Did you let her in? I wisht I'd a-been here to slam the door in her rotten face.

KIZZIE

Now you wouldn't a-done no such a thing, Kate, and you know you wouldn't. Of course I treated her kind and polite, and brought her in here.

(*She follows* KATE *around the table, pleading with her.* KATE *examines the torn lining of her coat.*)

KATE

I'll bet you just eat her up, and told her everything you know.

(*She goes into the kitchen, through the door at the left.*)

KIZZIE

(*Following her a little way*)

Kate, you know I didn't tell her a thing. Just listen to me a minute, will you? Just a minute.

KATE

(*Coming back with a sewing basket, and sitting down at the table*)

The low-down, dirty dog. Sneakin' around, pryin' on people's kids.

KIZZIE

Now, Kate, she meant well. I know she did. She was just as clever and common as she could be. (KATE *tosses her head.*) She come here to tell you she seen Kathern take up with a strange taxi-driver down there on Main Street, near the knittin' mill, and she was

worried about her. She says she's seen her take up with several no-count men that just spoke to her 'cause she's pretty; and we got to be careful of her. And it's the truth. I've told you, an' told you so. . . .

KATE

And I guess you told her everything you could think of that Katherine's done that you don't think's right. I reckon you told her Katherine wasn't sick that last time she laid out of school.

KIZZIE

(*Helplessly*)

Kate, you know I didn't do no such thing, I—

KATE

I know you're a fool for lettin' that woman in—that's what I know. I reckon you'll be proud and singin' hymns when you get the child put in a home, or somewheres where she'll be a little drudge, and you won't see her no more till she's eighteen.

KIZZIE

That's hard, Kate. A hard thing for you to say to your mother when she—

KATE

The old buzzard! To come around here tryin' to poke her nose in my business. She made up that tale about the taxi-driver. She come to me with one like that before, an' Katherine said there wasn't a word of

truth in it. Of course the child's pretty, and men stare at her, but she's nothin' but a baby. She don't know a thing about men but what she got out of the picture shows.

KIZZIE

(*She has started to the kitchen, and now she sits down, in a chair by the door*)

It's a great pity she ain't got no daddy to keep her in order. Seems like a daddy allus has more power over a girl.

KATE

I can't help it she's got no daddy. Want me to go out and get her one?

KIZZIE

I don't reckon I'd trust another one if I was you, after one man served you such a trick—married you, an' then run off and left you, soon as you got a young'un to take keer of. Kathern shore needs a helpin' hand from some'ers. She shore does.

KATE

She's pretty enough to get by with a lot of things, Mamma. Boys run after her like bees after a honey-pot.

KIZZIE

She can't keep her mind on her books with men in her head, and shows in her head. It's shows that's a-ruinin' her. If she'd go to prayer meetin' with Carl Rogers, 'stead of to the show.

KATE

She don't seem to care for Carl Rogers, does she? He's crazy enough about her to marry her any time she'd have him. But he's kind of slow. He don't spend much showin' her a good time.

KIZZIE

He's shore put out some money for us, and I don't know what returns he thinks he's a-goin' to git for it, neither. He ain't a-tryin' to marry her, knowin' how young she is?

KATE

He thinks she's around eighteen. She told him so.

KIZZIE

Kate, she'll be fourteen, come to-morry a week. Why, when I wasn't no older than that, I wasn't a-thinkin' of nothin' but my books and my playthings.

KATE

You wasn't turned loose on these streets to play, neither—and she don't get along in her books. Where is she now?

KIZZIE

Gone, some'ers. I never know where she is, but she's allus gone. She stood there in front of that glass a full hour 'fore she left, an' primped—dobbed herself up shameful with powder and paint. I made her rub off the wust of it 'fore I let her out of the house.

KATE

(*Rising and going to the bureau*)

Let her have her good time as long as I draw my pay. I led the cuttin' room to-day, but it sure took everything out of me. (*She picks up the alarm clock.*) Did you set the clock with the whistle? I was ten minutes late this mornin', and I got docked.

KIZZIE

I set it when I heard the whistle, same as I allus do. (*She gets up stiffly, and goes to the kitchen.*) No tellin' when Kathern'll get home.

KATE

All right, Mamma. I'll help you.

KIZZIE

You go set down and rest yourself. You're plumb wore out, and they ain't so much to do I can't do it.

(KIZZIE *goes into the kitchen, and* KATE *sits at the table, head thrust forward; thinking, rather than resting—tapping the table nervously. The hurried click of high-heeled slippers is heard in the hall, and* KATHERINE *comes in. She walks straight over to the mirror, and looks at herself casually, taking off her hat, and patting her hair. Her mother watches her appraisingly.* KATHERINE *might be sixteen, eighteen, or what she is, nearly fourteen. She is extremely pretty; the prettiness shines through*

her make-up. Her brown hair is becomingly cut, and frames her piquant face charmingly. She is slender and dressed in the appropriate finery that fourteen, abetted by moving pictures and not restrained at home, would choose. Her little slippers are absurdly high-heeled. There is a hint of hardness in her face, and something of defiance lurking in the corners of her mouth. Her mother's face softens with the prettiness of her.)

KATE

Where have you been?

KATHERINE

To the show.

KATE

Who with?

KATHERINE

(*Going over to her mother, gaily*)
Danny. He's got his new navy uniform on.

KIZZIE

(*She has heard them and now she comes in, brandishing a large spoon*)
Pretty time of night for you to be comin' in here. You ought to be in before dark, without me or your mother's with you.

KATHERINE

Got anything for supper?

KIZZIE

Got a plenty for them that's not so partic'ler about their eatin's.

KATHERINE

Got any more chocolate cake?

(*She starts toward the kitchen, and* KIZZIE *snatches at her arm*)

KIZZIE

Don't you go in there to that cake again. I'm savin' that for your mother's lunch. (KATHERINE *goes into the kitchen.*) Kate, make her leave that cake alone. She's e't nearly all of it now, an' she won't eat a mouthful of victuals when there's cake in the house.

KATE

Let her have it. I don't want it. Do let the child get enough to eat, Mamma.

KIZZIE

Well, it ain't right for her to act like that, and you know it. (KATHERINE *comes back eating a large, uneven hunk of cake. She makes a little face at* KIZZIE.) Look-a-there at her. She's got the last bit of it. Don't think of nobody but herself.

(KATHERINE *laughs and sits down on the edge of the table by her mother.*)

KATHERINE

Mamma, let's me and you go to see Gloria Swanson to-night.

KIZZIE

Kate, it's prayer-meetin' night.

KATE

Oh, Mamma, hush up about prayer-meetin'. You're welcome to go if you want to, but they ain't none of them over there'd stir a step to help you if you fell in your tracks.

(KATHERINE *laughs.*)

KIZZIE

You're a-goin' to suck sorrow one of these days, Kate, for talkin' like that. Mark my words if you don't.

(*She goes sorrowfully back to the kitchen.*)

KATHERINE

Gran'ma don't know what's what, does she?

KATE

I guess she knows more about raisin' you than I do. (KATHERINE *shakes her head gaily.*) Katherine, have you been takin' up with strange men again?

KATHERINE

No-o-o. . . .

KATE

Yes, you have. That police-woman was around here this evenin', talkin' to your gran'ma, and it's no tellin' what Gran'ma told her.

KATHERINE

She didn't tell her I laid out of school and wasn't sick, did she?

KATE

I don't know. She says she didn't. You had no business to do it, anyway. I'll bet you've done that little thing just one time too many, young lady. I'll bet your goose is cooked this time.

KATHERINE

You can get me out, can't you? You can go to court, like you did before, and swear.

KATE

(*Wearily*)

I got you out twice, but if they get a warrant out for you again, you're done for. I can't do no more for you.

KATHERINE

What'll they do to me, Mamma? I didn't want to go to school. They can't do nothin' just for that.

KATE

They've got the law with them, and they're a dirty bunch. They're gettin' paid for every child they can take away from its mother and put in a home.

KIZZIE

(*From the doorway*)

That ain't so, Kate. Them Welfare folks is just a-doin' their duty as they see it.

KATE

(*Savagely*)

Why don't you go and join them. You're so crazy about 'em—want to give your own flesh and blood to 'em.

KIZZIE

Now you know, Kate, they ain't a word of that so —ain't a word of it so.

(*She goes back into the kitchen.*)

KATE

(*Quietly, to* KATHERINE)

Why don't you be nice to Carl Rogers? You know I borrowed money from him, and he'll give you anything you want. He'd marry you any time you'd have him.

KATHERINE

Aw, I don't like him so much. He's so old. I wouldn't have him. (*Laughing, and kicking her little heels joyously against the table legs.*) I'm gonna marry a good-lookin' millionaire, and have fifteen pairs of shoes and two automobiles, and oodles of money!

(*Her mother smiles.*)

KIZZIE

(*Coming out of the kitchen, and bearing down on the two accusingly*)

Just listen to that child, Kate. She's a-goin' to the dogs as fast as she can. Pore child. I shore do pity her. (KATHERINE *laughs.*) If I was you, I would

make her treat Carl Rogers decent, if I was a-goin' to keep on borrowin' from him.

KATE

It's so, Katherine. You better had treat him good. I've got to get more out of him to pay some of these pressin' debts, or we'll lose what little we got.

KATHERINE

I can't stand the way he looks at me, and he's always wantin' to put his hands on me, or kiss me, or something. I'm scared of him.

KATE

That's silly, Katherine. He don't mean no harm. But don't let him kiss you—I don't want him to get to thinkin' he's goin' to have you.

KATHERINE

Nobody is gonna have me, lessen I say so.

KIZZIE

(*She has been listening attentively*)

Just be good and kind to him, and laugh him out of it if he talks too serious. You ain't old enough for that.

KATHERINE

I am, too. But I wouldn't talk about it to him.

(*She has finished the cake and now brushes the crumbs from her skirt to the floor.*)

KIZZIE

Kate, do make her stop a-droppin' them crumbs on the floor for me to pick up. She'll not stir a hand to touch 'em.

KATE

(*Rising*)

Come on to supper, Katherine.

KATHERINE

(*Jumping down from the table, where she has been sitting*)

Don't want none.

KIZZIE

(*Shaking the dish-cloth at* KATE)

Looky here. I told you she'd not eat a bite of victuals if she got filled up with cake.

KATE

(*Going on to the kitchen*)

Oh, Mamma, I wish you'd keep that dish-rag out of my face.

(KATHERINE *parades up and down the floor before her grandmother, examining her trim, black slippers with pardonable pride.* KIZZIE *finds a new grievance.*)

KIZZIE

Kate, she's got another pair of fine slippers on.

KATHERINE

Hush, up, Gran'ma.

KIZZIE

Where'd you get 'em, and how'd you get 'em?

KATHERINE

I charged 'em at Meyers'.

KIZZIE

Did you hear that, Kate? She charged 'em. As big a bill as we owe there. (*To* KATHERINE.) It's a wonder they let you have 'em.

(*There is a knock at the door, and* KATE *silences* KIZZIE *hurriedly.*)

KATE

Hush, Mamma! That's Carl Rogers. Come on in here.

(*She disappears in the kitchen, and* KIZZIE *pauses for a final admonition, delivered in a half-whisper.*)

KIZZIE

Now mind what your mamma told you, an' treat Carl Rogers decent.

(*She goes out slowly.* CARL ROGERS *knocks again, and* KATHERINE *tosses her head scornfully. She makes him wait while she preens herself before the mirror—dabs her hair and eyebrows and the tips of her ears with perfume, darkens her eyebrows a little, and touches her lips with red. He knocks a third time, and she calls ungracious permission for him to enter.*)

KATHERINE

Come in.

(CARL *enters, and stands looking at her admiringly. He is low, and stockily built, with oily hair, and a thick neck that reddens easily. His hands are blunt and roughened by manual labor. His trousers bag a little, and his tie has a large, bright, imitation stick-pin. Altogether he is not a figure to win the admiration, or affection, of a stage-struck child.* KATHERINE'S *mouth tightens with exasperation, and she turns back to the mirror and pats her hair self-consciously.*)

CARL

Your mamma here?

KATHERINE

Yeah. She's eatin' supper. Come on in. Don't stand there holdin' the door open. (*She enjoys his embarrassment, and purposely delays calling her mother for a moment.*) Mamma, Mr. Rogers wants you.

(*A chair scrapes the floor in the kitchen and* KATE *comes in.*)

KATE

(*Cordially*)

Come have some supper, won't you?

CARL

I just come to tell you Mis' Bloom says you're wanted on the 'phone.

KATE

All right, thank you. Sit down.
(*She goes out.*)

CARL

Thank you. (*He closes the door and goes nearer* KATHERINE, *swaggering a little—trying to be easy with her.*) Swell brand of perfume you're sportin'.

KATHERINE

(*Holding the little blue atomizer under his nose*)
Just smell. Danny gave it to me. It costs about five dollars a thimbleful—but Danny don't care how he spends his money.

CARL

A man don't mind spendin' money on a girl that cares somethin' about him, but nobody wants to waste their money on a girl that gives him the go-by.

KATHERINE

I ain't give you the go-by.

CARL

You broke your last two dates with me. How 'bout Tuesday?

KATHERINE

I forgot I promised Danny.

CARL

How about last night, then?

KATHERINE

(*Flouncing into the chair by the kitchen*)
I was out ridin' and the car broke down. I couldn't help it if the old car broke.

CARL

To hear you tell it, it ain't never your fault you don't want to have a date with me. Your mamma said you'd give me a date to-night.

KATHERINE

My mamma don't fix my dates for me.

CARL

All right. Maybe she don't. I'm not askin' her, now, I'm askin' you. Will you go with me to a show to-night?

KATHERINE

I might got a date with Danny. I don't know.

CARL

I reckon he asked you for it last week, didn't he?

KATHERINE

I don't see it's any of your business.

CARL

(*His neck reddens, then his face*)
Looky here. You didn't give me no reason to think

it wasn't my business. I may be crazy about you, but I don't want no girl that's got half-a-dozen fellers closter to her than I am.

KATHERINE

I reckon you think it makes no matter how many girls you hang out with—no-count girls.

CARL

That ain't got nothin' to do with you and me.

KATHERINE

(*Stamping her foot at him*)

Don't make so much noise or Gran'ma'll hear you, and I don't want her messin' around.

CARL

(*He puts his foot on a chair, takes out a cigarette lighter, and lights a cigarette with heavy nonchalance.* KATHERINE *watches him out of the corner of her eye.*)

You know I'm crazy about you, don't you?

KATHERINE

Just so you keep your hands off me. (*Changing the subject.*) That's a cute trick.

CARL

I give it to myself for a present to-day. My bank balance was gettin' kind of heavy.

KATHERINE

Ain't you somethin'. Here, let me see it. (*She goes over to take the lighter from his hand. He holds it out to her, and, at the same time, slyly burns the back of her hand with his cigarette tip.* KATHERINE *lets the lighter fall to the floor with a clatter.*) Oh-h-h! (*Nursing her hand.*) You old fool! (CARL *laughs, and she holds out her burned hand to him indignantly.*) Look-a-there what you done!

CARL

Don't mind a little thing like that. I was just playin'. (*He snatches her hand and tries to kiss it.*) Let me make it well.

KATHERINE

Turn me a-loose.

CARL

(*Twisting her arm and bringing her face close to his*) Give me a kiss.

KATHERINE

Ouch! Take your old face away or I'll call Gran'ma. (KIZZIE *opens the kitchen door.* KATE'S *footsteps are heard in the hall.*) Here comes mamma anyway.

(KATE *opens the door and comes quickly across to her mother. There is something savage and unreasoning in her eyes; the others sense it, and look at her curiously.*)

KATE

Mamma, they got a warrant out for Katherine, an' they're gonna have her up in court to-morrow.

KIZZIE

I knowed it. I knowed it would come to this, with her a-layin' out of school, and cuttin' up like she's done.

KATE

She's gone, Mamma—she's just as good as gone! They've got her away from me like they said they would.

KIZZIE

Ain't there nothin' you can do about it, Kate?

KATHERINE

(*She has been watching her mother anxiously*)
Mamma, you're goin' to swear for me again, ain't you? They can't get me, can they? I'll run away.

(*She tugs at her mother's arm.* KATE *sits down by the table and leans on it heavily.* CARL *looks helplessly embarrassed.*)

KATE

They got you this time, Katherine, sure.

CARL

If they's any way I can help you . . .

KIZZIE

Pore child. I knowed she was a-layin' up misery for herself.

KATE

(*Fiercely*)

That woman thinks she's got me beat, damn her time! She's gettin' paid for takin' Katherine, and she's after all the money she can get. All them Welfarers are in league with the gover'ment, gettin' our children when they can steal a march on us—catchin' a hold on us when we get hard up for help, so's they can strangle us.

KIZZIE

Be careful what you're a-sayin', Kate. You don't know who's a-listenin' to you, nor what'll be done with you for talkin' like that.

KATHERINE

Mamma, take me away somewheres. Don't let them take me to no old home. You can swear for me.

KATE

No, I'll not let 'em have you. I'll fool that old dog. (*Her expression grows cunning. She goes over to the bureau and searches in one of the drawers. The others watch her in amazement.*) Carl, let's you and me and Katherine go to the movies.

KIZZIE

Shorely you're not a-goin' to the shows with such a

pack o' trouble on us. Ain't you gonna try to help her at all, Kate?—What are you rummagin' my things for? Leave 'em alone.

KATE

What you say, Carl? Katherine?

CARL

I'm willin', Mis' Meadows, if she is.

KATHERINE

Will they get me, Mamma? You gonna fix it up by swearin'?

KATE

(*Her voice is hard*)

Yes, I'll fix it up. Let's go. (*She turns around suddenly, changing her plans.*) You-all stay here a minute. I got business to 'tend to first. I'll go over to Mis' Bloom's and 'phone; you and Carl stay here and come to meet me in a few minutes.

KATHERINE

Why can't we come on as you do?

KATE

(*Evasively*)

This business can't be 'tended to with nobody listenin'.

KATHERINE

We won't tell.

KIZZIE

What you gonna do, Kate?

KATE

Come on over to Mis' Bloom's in a few minutes.
(*She goes to the door, and* KIZZIE *follows her.*)

KIZZIE

You didn't eat enough supper to keep your legs a-movin', Kate.

KATE

I got enough, Mamma. So long. We'll not be late gettin' back. Estelle will come in an' set with you.
(*The door closes after her.* KIZZIE *drops the dish-cloth wearily on the table and looks from one to the other of the two left behind.*)

KIZZIE

I shore wouldn't be at no shows to-night. I shore wouldn't.

KATHERINE

You wouldn't never be at one.

KIZZIE

Well, I ain't a-sufferin' for the lack of them.

CARL

They ain't no real harm in 'em, Mis' Kizzie.

KATHERINE

(*Jumping up impatiently from her grandmother's rocker*)

Come on, let's go find mamma. I want to know what she's up to.

(*She goes out, and* CARL *follows.*)

KIZZIE

You better not go. You ain't waited as long as she told you.

KATHERINE

I don't care.

(*The door closes after them.*)

KIZZIE

I shore wouldn't be at no shows this evenin'. I shore wouldn't.

(She stoops and picks up the crumbs of cake, and hides them behind the broom in the corner. The second prayer-meeting hymn can be heard distinctly, "Jesus loves me, this I know; For the Bible tells me so—" KIZZIE *listens a moment to the music. The energy that kept her stirring while her folks were there to be "done for" is gone out of her, and she is again the drooping old woman who sat crying by the window. She gets a large, limp-backed Bible from the table and sits down in her rocker at the window. She reads slowly, spelling the words out to herself, with her finger. Pres-*

ently the hall door opens, and a comely young woman puts her head in.)

ESTELLE

Mis' Kizzie?

KIZZIE

Come in, Estelle.

ESTELLE

(ESTELLE *comes in and closes the door softly. She is a large, amiable young woman; red-haired, blue-eyed, dimpled. She is carelessly dressed in a blue gingham wrapper, shapeless bedroom slippers, and stockings with holes. Her hair seems always on the verge of coming down and she is continually taking out hairpins and putting them back with the hope of keeping it up.*)

I just nussed the young-un and got him to sleep, if only them prayer-meetin' folks don't wake him. I thought I'd come and set with you awhile and hear the singin'. Your folks is all gone.

KIZZIE

Set down, Estelle.

ESTELLE

Whereabouts was you readin', Mis' Kizzie? Let me read to you awhile; I like to.

(*She takes the Bible and sits by the table.*)

KIZZIE

I don't care if you do. Seems like I can understand better through my ears than I can through my eyes.

ESTELLE

Job. I never was so fond of Job myself—too down in the mouth.

KIZZIE

Me an' Job is kinfolks. You knowed I was named for his daughter, didn't you?

ESTELLE

I don't remember hearin' you say, 'cept your name was Keziah. I wouldn't claim kin with Job, Mis' Kizzie.

KIZZIE

Ma used to tell me time and again how she come to call me. Her an' Pa'd had a heap o' trouble—Pa'd been off to the wars—but they thought their troubles was over when I come along. So Ma picked out the likeliest one of Job's daughters that he had after his troubles was over to call me by. She thought she put a good-luck name on me, but Aunt Peeney told her she'd not.

ESTELLE

Lord, Mis' Kizzie, a name don't mean nothin' but somethin' to handle you by.

KIZZIE

Aunt Peeney, one of Ma's niggers, told her it was a bad-luck name. Why, one time, when I wasn't nothin' but a little feller, layin' in my cradle by the kitchen stove, Ma was settin' by me, and Aunt Peeney was fixin' me a sugar-tit, Ma just happened to say that name hadn't proved nothin' but good luck to me yet, when all to onct I reached up and pulled off a hot lamp chimney down on my face, and burnt me half to death. They never thought I'd live. Aunt Peeney used to tell me of it when I 'us a little-un.

(*She almost weeps, remembering, pitying herself.*)

ESTELLE

But, Lord, Mis' Kizzie, that don't make you like Job. You been a lucky woman.

KIZZIE

Whenever I had good luck, bad luck followed it.—First my man was took from me, and then my home place, and I reckon I'll end my days in a stranger's house.

ESTELLE

You got friends around you, Mis' Kizzie.

KIZZIE

And look how trouble's come to Kate. She works so hard and she can't seem to get nowhere. She's the kind that needed a man, an' she got a worthless man

that was no good to her. (*She feels of the stockings and takes them down from the window.*) Now Kathern's on the road to ruin. Seems like the Lord's turned his face from us, and his light don't shine on us no more.

ESTELLE

Look-a-here, Mis' Kizzie, don't you worry 'bout Katherine. You're a-gettin' too old to be bothered like you are. It ain't right. It'll put you in your grave if you keep at it.

(*She eats a little of the cake icing that* KATHERINE *left on the table.*)

KIZZIE

I can't help it. Seems like I can't stop. Poor little Kathern. I pity her so.

ESTELLE

Kate hadn't ought to fight them Welfare folks so hard.

KIZZIE

I've told her and told her so.

(*She puts the stockings in the bureau drawer and goes back to her chair.*)

ESTELLE

It's dangerous to meddle with the law, much less to fight it. Course I don't mean Mis' Kate should get down on her knees and eat 'em up. They's more ways to kill a dog than choke him with butter.

KIZZIE

I'm so 'feared of what'll happen to Kathern.

(*From the church next door a third hymn is started. It comes to the two women softened a bit by distance, and they pause to listen.*)

"I was sinking deep in sin,
Far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within,
Sinking to rise no more.
But the master of the sea,
Heard my despairing cry,
From the waters lifted me,
Now safe am I.

"Love lifted me; love lifted me.
When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me.
Love lifted me; love lifted me.
When nothing else could help,
Love lifted me."

(KIZZIE *turns from the window and her face lights up*)

I do love pretty singin'; I'd rather listen to it than eat when I'm hungry. Seems like a pity to set outside the door listenin'. I reckon a body ought not to let trouble keep 'em from meetin'. It grieves me to think Kate and Kathern's at the show. They can't look for the Good Man to help 'em if they don't set foot in His house.

ESTELLE

Does look like we ought to go, bein' this close, don't

it? Sometimes, I wisht we wasn't so close. Seems like this bricked-up wall shuts out the light and air and makes it so dark.

KIZZIE

These church folks ain't so clever and common, somehow, as the folks at Friedburg church was. They're kind o' stand-offish and proud. Don't come a-nigh a body in trouble.

ESTELLE

Lord, I wouldn't want 'em around me. When somethin's wrong with me I want to go off in a hole or a corner, and lick myself, like a dog. I don't want nobody a-pesterin' me.

KIZZIE

You can do that when you're young and strong, Estelle, with your life before you. But when you've knowed what it is to have somethin', and seen it took away from you, and when you get old like I am, you've got to have folks to cling to.

ESTELLE

I reckon so, Mis' Kizzie.

(She blows the dust from the artificial flowers on the table.)

KIZZIE

I don't know what's to become of us, Estelle. That

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rent man come here again to-day, an' talked to me so hard I felt like crawlin' off some'ers and hidin'.

ESTELLE

Some folks will never believe you can't get blood out of a turnip till they've had a squeeze at it. (*Several people can be heard coming down the hall, and both women lift their heads to listen.*) Reckon who could that be?

KIZZIE

(*Rising*)

If it's more trouble, I can't stand it, that's all. (*The door opens and* KATE, *followed by* KATHERINE *and* CARL, *comes in.* ESTELLE *gets up and goes to the door. There is an unnatural excitement in* KATE'S *movements and in her face. She has an air of recklessness.* KATHERINE'S *color is heightened, and she looks at her mother expectantly.* CARL *is as close to* KATHERINE *as he can get.*) You must not have been to the show. You got back so soon.

KATE

(*Throwing her hat on the bed*)

No, we didn't.

ESTELLE

I'll be runnin' along, Mis' Kizzie. You don't need me no more. Did you hear any young-un noises in my bedroom as you passed, Mis' Kate?

KATE

No, I didn't. Thank you for staying with mamma.

ESTELLE

(*Going out*)

You're shore welcome. Mis' Kizzie an' me had a good time listenin' to the singin'.

KIZZIE

(*Looking from one to the other, suspiciously*)

What you been up to, Kate?

KATE

Show your Grandma, Katherine.

(KATHERINE *holds up her left hand, which has an old-fashioned wedding ring on the ring finger.* KIZZIE *grabs her hand excitedly.*)

KIZZIE

What's she a-doin' with my weddin' ring? It's mine, ain't it?

KATE

The same thing you done with it. I had to borrow yours, for there wasn't no time for Carl to get her one, and your finger and hers is nearly of a size. Mine wouldn't fit her, an' besides it's got bad luck on it.

KIZZIE

Kate, what have you done?

KATE

I got the best of that woman. She'll not put Katherine in her old reformatory. I've give her to Carl, and he's promised me to take care of her.

KATHERINE

She swore I was eighteen, Grandma.

CARL

(*Importantly*)

We got it fixed up, Mis' Kizzie. They can't put her nowhere as long as she's my wife.

(KATHERINE *looks at him timidly.*)

KIZZIE

I knowed it. I knowed she'd be ruint. But for her own folks to ruin her! Better have let her gone where they wanted to put her.

KATE

Mamma!

CARL

You look here. I done you a favor by takin' her like this, even if I did want her, and don't you forget it, neither. (*He turns to* KATHERINE.) Come on, let's go.

KATHERINE

(*Startled*)

I ain't goin' nowhere, am I, Mamma?

(KATE *says nothing.*)

1. Scene from *Job's Kinfolks*, a tragedy of the mill people by Loretto Carroll Bailey. CARL ROGERS (Moore Bryson); KATE (Noel Walker); KATHERINE (Lois Warden); KIZZIE (Loretto Carroll Bailey, THE AUTHOR).

CARL: So this was just a frame-up on me, was it?

2. THE AUTHOR of *Job's Kinfolks*, Loretto Carroll Bailey, playing the leading rôle, KIZZIE, in her own play.

Photographs by Wootten-Moulton.

CARL

You ain't? (*He turns to* KATE.) So this was just a frame-up on me, was it? I marry her, but I don't get her.

KATE

I didn't say she wouldn't go with you. Try being kind to her.

CARL

Look-a-here, I didn't take no spoiled young-un on my hands. (*To* KATHERINE.) If you ain't enough of a woman, you better act like it, anyhow. (*To* KATE.) I ain't gonna wheedle her along nor baby her none, I can tell you that. Come on.

KATHERINE

(*Her lips are trembling*)

Mamma, don't make me go with him. I'm scared of him.

(KIZZIE *looks at* KATE, *whose face has lost its triumph.*)

CARL

(*Snarling at* KATE, *then at* KIZZIE)

You've turned her agin me on purpose, but it'll do you no good. You give her to me when you swore she was eighteen—made her mine, see? If you'd had sense enough to see which side your bread was buttered on you'd have behaved better toward me. (*He takes* KATHERINE'S *hand.*) Come on upstairs with me.

KATE

(*Her arm around* KATHERINE)

Go on with him, Katherine. They ain't nothin' to be afraid of, and you're a married woman now.

KATHERINE

(*Pausing in the door*)

Mamma, don't make me go.

KATE

Go on, Katherine.

(*She closes the door after* KATHERINE; *but she has no sooner closed it than* KATHERINE *bursts it open and rushes into her arms.*)

KATHERINE

Mamma, I can't stay with him. You don't know how he is. Honest you don't, Mamma.

KATE

Go on, Katherine. Don't be a baby. He'll be good to you, if you don't cross him now. But it's no tellin' how he'll treat you if you don't do as he says.

(*She takes her gently, firmly to the door.*)

KATHERINE

You can't make me go. Nobody can. (*Half sobbing.*) I can do what I please, I guess. I'll run away before I will.

KATE

Katherine!

KATHERINE

Mamma, you take me away somewheres.

KATE

Katherine, who were you running from when you took Carl so quick? You want the law to get you? Had you rather that woman had put you somewhere away from us all than to go upstairs with Carl and stay close to us in the same house?

(KATE *speaks to* KATHERINE *as if she were a very small child, afraid of the dark.*)

KATHERINE

No-o-o-o. . . .

KATE

Go on, then. Go on to him, or that woman's waitin' to get you.

(*She pushes the girl gently out and shuts the door. She leans limply against it.*)

KIZZIE

(*Going over to her chair again*)

She's gone to him. An' she's got my ring on, too. But she'll never know what I knowed with it. I can see it plain as if 'twas yestiddy—Henry carryin' me over the door sill the night we was married. I was so proud and happy when the door shut on us.

(*Somewhere upstairs a door slams faintly. It may not be a door that has anything to do with* KATHERINE, *but it breaks* KATE'S *control. She goes to the table, feverishly.*)

KATE

(*Half whispering*)

Did you hear that door slam? On Katherine? I did it. (*She comes to her mother, helplessly.*) I slammed it on my baby. She was all I had. Mamma!

(*With her head on her mother's lap she cries, softly.* KIZZIE *pats her shoulder and her hair, with little awkward, comforting movements.*)

KIZZIE

The Lord'll help her, Kate. He don't hold no grudge against nobody. (*She looks out the window.*) Church is dark. I reckon prayer-meetin's out. . . . Don't take on so, Kate. You won't be fit for your work to-morrow. Things goes on. Trouble don't stop nothin'. . . .

CURTAIN

IN DIXON'S KITCHEN

A Comedy of a Country Courtship

By

Wilbur Stout

(Written in collaboration with Ellen Lay)

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced on The Playmakers' Stage, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 29th and 30th, 1921.

HIRAM DIXON, *a dour old farmer,*
Le Grand Everett, Jr.

MA DIXON, *his wife,* Ellen Lay

ANNIE LEE DIXON, *their daughter,* Mary Yellott

GIL, JACK } *their sons, aged 16 and 12,* Thornton Gholson, George Winston

LEMUEL ISLEY, *Annie's "special" friend,*
Lloyd Williams

SCENE: A country district in the Piedmont section of North Carolina. The Dixons' kitchen.

TIME: The present. An evening in June.

THE SCENE

THE kitchen of the DIXONS' *home is a very neat, clean room, supplied with the furniture ordinarily found in a comfortable farmhouse. At the rear, left, is a long table set with an abundant country supper. A kitchen safe is at the right, and a small cook-table. At the left, front, is the stove, with the usual pots and pans, a woodbox, and a blue stone jar of cream covered with a white cloth. At the rear, right, is a window hung with a sash curtain; the water-bucket is in this corner. A door, at the center, opens on the side porch, and one at the left leads to the other part of the house. The unpainted walls of the room are of yellowish-brown color, presenting a rather attractive appearance in the glow of the shaded lamp.*

The DIXONS *are sitting at the supper table, all eating heartily.* LEM ISLEY, *who is "company," sits next to* ANNIE LEE *at the rear of the table.* MA *is on the right side, with* JACK *close beside her;* GIL *is opposite her and* PA *is seated with his back to the audience.*

LEM *is dressed up for the occasion in his Sunday blue-serge suit, new flowered necktie, and tan oxfords. The members of the* DIXON *family, with the exception of* ANNIE LEE, *are in their everyday work-clothes. (*ANNIE LEE *does not usually wear a pretty white dress when cooking supper, but to-night she wishes to appear at her best; and* MA *wears a small white sew-*

ing apron over her faded gingham dress.) JACK *wears overalls and has already started going barefoot, although the weather is still a little cool for that.* JACK *has crammed more chicken into his mouth than he can properly manage, and* MA DIXON *gives him a reproving yank by the ear, which calls forth a loud guffaw from* GIL. LEM *cannot refrain from laughing heartily too. But* MA, *unperturbed, turns sweetly to* ANNIE LEE'S *"company."*

MA

Have another piece of chicken, Lem. You're not eatin' any supper at all.

LEM

Thank you, ma'am. I believe I will.

(*By this time* PA *has finished eating and settles himself in a chair by the stove, where he puffs away comfortably at his pipe.*)

GIL

Pass it down this way when you get through with it, Lem. The rest of 'em has quit; I reckon it's up to us to clean out the dish.

ANNIE LEE

You oughtn't to eat so much supper, Gil, if you're going to the candy pullin' over at Carrie's to-night.

GIL

I was about to forget that. (*He eats with renewed energy.*) Annie Lee, it's too much trouble to move

that dish. Pitch me one of them cowcumber pickles over here by the tail.

ANNIE LEE

Why, Gil! I never heard such talk!

(*She is somewhat embarrassed, but forces a laugh and tosses a pickle across the table to him.* JACK *giggles.*)

GIL

That's the stuff! (*He pushes back his chair, takes the pickle in one hand, reaches with the other halfway across the table for a piece of chocolate layer-cake, crosses to the cook-table and cuts a generous slice from a gooseberry pie which* MA *has left there to cool.*) I'm in a rush! You-all can set and eat as long as you want to; I got somethin' better'n eatin' comin' to me.

(*He hurries off to dress up for the party.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*With mock formality*)

We will excuse you, Gilmer.

GIL

(*At the door; with exaggerated politeness*)

Thank you, ma'am.

ANNIE LEE

Have another biscuit, Lem. Don't stop eatin' just 'cause Gil did.

LEM

(*Glancing at his plate and helping himself*)

Thank you, Annie Lee.—Did you eat my biscuit, Jack? If you didn't, I'm afraid this makes about six for me.

JACK

Six? Is that the best you can count? You've done e't ten!

LEM

(*Glancing at* ANNIE LEE)

Well, maybe I have, Jack, if you kept count. It's mighty good bread all right.

MA

(*Smiling*)

Yes, Annie Lee is gettin' so she makes right good biscuit.

LEM

Did Annie Lee make these biscuits?

MA

Yes. I had some sewin' to do to-day, so I let Annie Lee do most all the cookin'.

LEM

No wonder I e't so many of 'em. That accounts for me likin' 'em so well.

JACK

You didn't cook enough, Annie Lee. He's hungry yet.

GIL

(*From the other room*)

What you-all done with my necktie?

MA

(*Raising her voice*)

It's on the foot of your pa's bed, Gil. I pressed it out for you this evenin' when I had the iron on the fire.

JACK

I got a necktie.

LEM

You have?

JACK

Uh-huh. (*Rummaging in his overalls pocket, he produces a bright red one.*) Ed give it to me.

LEM

Who's Ed?

JACK

Ed? Ed Nicholson. He's got red hair and he comes out from town to see Annie Lee sometimes.

(ANNIE LEE *knowing* JACK'S *propensity for making disconcerting remarks, glances anxiously at* MA.)

LEM

(*Worried*)

Oh, I see. . . . Does he come often?

JACK

Ed was out here the other day in an automobile. Wa'n't he, Pa?

PA

Uh-huh.

JACK

And Annie Lee said she'd rather ride with—

(MA *silences* JACK *by putting her hand over his mouth.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Flurried*)

Do you know Mr. Nicholson, Lem?

LEM

(*Coldly*)

Just know him when I see him. (*There is an awkward pause. Then he pushes back his plate.*) Well, I ain't e't so much supper since old man Simpson's corn-shuckin'. I knowed you was a mighty fine cook, Annie Lee, but I didn't know you could cook like this.

ANNIE LEE

(*Blushing at* LEM'S *admiring glance*)

Oh, I like to cook.

MA

(*As they rise from the table*)

You-all go in the other room now. I'll wash up the dishes this time.

ANNIE LEE

You better try to get that dress finished, Ma. Lem and me will wash the dishes, if he don't mind.

LEM

I don't mind a bit. I'd like to help you.

(MA *takes down the dishpan and pours out the water from the kettle on the stove.* LEM *and* ANNIE LEE *clear the table.*)

MA

(*Pointedly to* PA, *who is still sitting by the stove, smoking contentedly, absorbed in his own thoughts*)

The paper come to-day. It's in yonder on the bed. Don't you want to read it?

PA

(*Fumbling for his glasses*)

Bring me that thar paper, Jack. I'll read a little 'fore I go to bed.

(JACK *goes and brings in the newspaper;* PA *settles comfortably to read it.*)

MA

You better go in the other room to read that paper. They'll be washin' the dishes in here. (PA *reluctantly*

resigns his ease and starts off. LEM *and* ANNIE LEE *are busy with the dishes but they watch anxiously till* PA *has quit the room.* MA *turns on* JACK *as she goes out.*) Jack, you got your kindlin' to get in for the mornin'.

JACK

(*Taking a chair at his post of observation, beside the door at the left.*)

All right, Mom.

PA

(*Meeting* GIL, *who now returns from the other room*)

Gil, you better let the horse git done eatin' 'fore you catch out.

GIL

(*Pulling at his necktie in an effort to adjust it properly*)

He ought to be done eatin' by now.

(PA *grunts and goes off.* GIL *begins to rub off his shoes with his handkerchief.*)

JACK

(*Sniffing the air and crossing to* GIL)

Annie Lee, he's been usin' your perfume!

ANNIE LEE

Gilmer Dixon!

(*She looks at him severely a moment, and then laughs.*)

LEM

(*Holding his nose*)

You smell like the "Breath-of-Spring" all right; but I think you better take yourself out to walk 'fore you go to the candy-pullin'. How much of it did you use, anyway?

(*They all laugh and* GIL *covers his embarrassment by hunting for his hat.*)

GIL

Oh, 'bout a spoonful, I reckon. Some spilled while I was messin' round in there. I wa'n't aimin' to use no perfume. (*He finds his hat on top of the kitchen safe, and starts to leave.*) That horse is done eatin' by now, I know.

PA

(*Reappearing at the door*)

Now, Gil, don't you come blunderin' back in here, 'way late at night, wakin' us all up. Remember the rest of us wants to get a little sleep, even if you don't.

GIL

(*In the doorway*)

All right, sir. I won't.

(LEM *and* ANNIE LEE *have finished clearing off the table and are preparing to wash the dishes on the cook-table which they have moved out into the room.* LEM *takes off his coat and* ANNIE LEE *arrays him in a big pink gingham*

apron. JACK *lingers in the room doing nothing in particular.*)

MA

(*Coming to the door*)

Jack! Jack! Come on out of there. I got somethin' I want you to do.

JACK

I'm not botherin' them, Ma. They're not doin' a thing!

(*Nevertheless* MA *pulls* JACK *out of the room.* ANNIE LEE *follows them to the door and closes it. She begins washing the dishes, passing them to* LEM *to be dried.* MA *comes back quietly to turn down the lamp which has begun to smoke, beams on them with approving affability, and goes out closing the door softly after her.*)

LEM

I wanted your Ma to get her sewin' done, Annie Lee, but that wasn't the main reason I wanted to help you.

ANNIE LEE

Why, what was the main reason?

LEM

(*After a pause*)

Oh, . . . just for fun. (*There is another pause.*) Annie Lee, did Ed Nicholson help you wash the dishes when he was out here?

ANNIE LEE

No, he wasn't here for supper. But I reckon he would have helped me.

LEM

Huh! He never had an apron on in his life. He thinks folks wash dishes with a vacuum cleaner.

ANNIE LEE

Now, Lem! You're just runnin' Ed down 'cause he's a city boy. If you knew him like I do, you'd like him fine.

LEM

Oh, I know him well enough. He's just not worth a—much.

ANNIE LEE

I'm sorry you feel that way about him, 'cause I kind o' like Ed.

LEM

(*Forgetting the dishes and coming close to her side*)
How much?

ANNIE LEE

(*Pushing him away and indicating the unwiped dishes*)
Oh, now, Lem. Don't get jealous. Just look how far behind you're getting.

(*They work in silence for a time.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Shyly*)

I wonder if you'll be willin' to help like this when . . .

LEM

(*Alert*)

When, when?

ANNIE LEE

Oh, you know when . . . when you . . . get . . . married.

LEM

Do you think she'd want me to?

(*In taking up a wet dish he fumbles and lets it slip and fall to the floor.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Amused*)

No, I don't think so. Not if you drop them around like that.

(*She picks up the pieces of the broken dish and puts them in the woodbox.*)

JACK

(*Bursting into the kitchen*)

Say, Annie Lee, come on out here! That old cat's got kittens and they ain't got their eyes open yet. Come on out here and see 'em!

ANNIE LEE

(*Shocked*)

Don't bother us, Jack. Can't you see we're busy? (*She goes to the table, gets a plate of scraps, and gives them to him.*) Now you take this to the cat, and you go look at them.

JACK

Aw, you come on, Annie Lee.

ANNIE LEE

Now, run on out, Jack. (*Reluctantly he goes and she closes the door after him.*) I'm much obliged to you, Lem, for helpin' me wash the dishes. I wish I could help you some way.

LEM

Well, if you don't, it won't be because you don't get the chance. (*They continue. When* ANNIE LEE *reaches for the last dish, her face comes temptingly near to* LEM'S. *He starts to kiss her, but misses by a few inches.*) Dad gum it! I almost caught myself kissin' you when you leaned over to get that dish.

ANNIE LEE

(*Carrying a pile of the dishes over to the safe*)

That's all right, so long as you don't let me catch you doin' it.

LEM

Um . . . m . . . m. . . . I wish I knew whether . . . whether . . .

ANNIE LEE

(*Slyly*)

What did you say?

(PA *enters in his yarn socks—he was warming his feet by the fire in the other room. He says not a word, but crosses the kitchen, gets himself a drink of water at the bucket, turns and walks deliberately back the whole length of the room.* LEM *and* ANNIE LEE *pretend being very busy.* LEM *gets into his coat, preparing to leave.* ANNIE LEE *puts the last of the dishes away in the safe.*)

PA

We all want to get to bed pretty early here to-night; Annie Lee, you know what we got to do to-morrow.

ANNIE LEE

(*Obediently*)

Yes, sir.

PA

And I don't want to hear no such racket as you and Jack was a-makin' last night. I got to get a little sleep sometime.

LEM

Yes, sir. I was just a-thinkin' it was about time for me to be wakin' up old Bob.

PA

Well, I 'spect you better do it then.

(*He makes this suggestion half under his*

breath, and goes off, leaving the door wide open behind him. ANNIE LEE *hastens to close it.*)

ANNIE LEE

Now, you put the table back in the corner, Lem. (*He does so while she takes off her apron and hangs it up on a nail. She hesitates a little, then draws a chair toward him.*) Do you want to go in and talk to Ma awhile, or would you just as soon stay out here in the kitchen?

LEM

Naw, I come to talk to you—in the kitchen, or outdoors, or anywhere else.

(*They sit down with their chairs not too far apart.*)

ANNIE LEE

Now, don't talk like that, 'cause I know you don't mean it.

LEM

I do mean it, too. I'd swear it on a stack of Bibles a mile high.

ANNIE LEE

You talk like you'd said that before. How many other girls have you said that to in the last month?

LEM

Nobody else. But if I could just say what I'd like to, you'd be surprised.

ANNIE LEE

Say it. I like to be surprised.

(*She puts her hand on his arm. He takes it up, impulsively, and kisses it.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Starting away*)

Why, Lem! I wouldn't have thought that of you. I thought you were more of a man than to take advantage of me like that. I'm not that kind of a girl and I thought you knew it.

LEM

But that's nothin' to get red about. (*Rising to go.*) If you're goin' to cloud up and storm . . .

ANNIE LEE

Well, if it's nothin', what was you tryin' to do it for? I don't intend to do anything like that till I'm engaged.

LEM

I'm sorry, Annie Lee. I reckon I did sort o' act the fool. . . . I'm sorry. . . . I'm not that kind of a fellow either. I wouldn't go with a girl that would let anybody kiss her till they was engaged. (*There is a painful silence.*) I feel awful mean about it, Annie Lee. . . . I'll try to do better—next time.

ANNIE LEE

(*Going to him and putting her hand softly on his arm*)

It's not all that bad, Lem. It's just your doin' it without . . .

LEM

(*Vastly relieved*)

Well, let's forget about it and start all over again. (*He takes her impulsively by the hand and leads her back to the chair again.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Mischievously, drawing her hand away*)

Do you feel any better now?

LEM

Lots better! Folks always feel better after a little spat.

ANNIE LEE

What makes a boy want to kiss a girl for . . . like that, anyway?

LEM

Dad burn it, I don't know! Durn the fellow that invented kissin' anyway. He caused more trouble than anybody else.

ANNIE LEE

Oh, I don't know. It's all right . . . in its place.

LEM

Where is its place?

ANNIE LEE

It's not . . . on the hand.

LEM

Generally speakin', is it—in the kitchen?

ANNIE LEE

(*Wistfully*)

Generally speakin', it's anywhere that a boy and girl . . . love each other. . . .

LEM

I could fill my side of a bargain like that.

ANNIE LEE

(*Breathlessly*)

But you don't love me.

LEM

(*Boldly now, he puts his arm over the back of her chair*)

I do too. I love you, Annie Lee.

ANNIE LEE

No, you don't. You just say you do.

LEM

Maybe that's the way Ed talks. But I mean it. How can I prove it to you?

ANNIE LEE

Not by sayin' so. You just said that . . . to get a chance to . . . kiss me.

LEM

I always thought kissin' was the way to prove it.

ANNIE LEE

(*Shaking her head*)

Nh . . . nh. . . .

LEM

What's the use for me to say it? What do you reckon I rode over here for? To sit around and talk? No! If there's any way to prove it, I'll do it, if it's to swallow old Bob!

(*He is down on his knees when* JACK *reappears suddenly at the door.*)

JACK

Annie Lee, get me a drink of water. (ANNIE LEE *gets him one and holds the dipper for him while he drinks long and thirstily. Then he grins.*) Mamma said I could stay in here a little while, if you-all would let me.

ANNIE LEE

(*Coldly*)

Just a little while, Jack. It's most time for you to be in bed.

(*They resume their seats while* JACK *tries to entertain them.*)

JACK

I can stand on my head. . . . Hold my feet up, Lem. Now see if I can stand. (*He stands inverted a moment* LEM *assisting him. A shower of marbles, nails, etc., descends from his pockets to the floor. He makes haste to recover his possessions.* LEM *resumes his chair, but* JACK *persists, following him.*) Wa'n't that good?

LEM

(*Glumly*)

Good a-plenty!

(*Now* JACK *climbs up into* LEM'S *lap, and* LEM, *hard-pressed for a way out, scrubs his chin on* JACK'S *face.*)

JACK

(*Gleefully*)

Gee whizz, Annie Lee! Does it hurt you like that?

ANNIE LEE

(*At her wit's end*)

You'd better go to bed now, Jack.

JACK

No, I'm not sleepy. (*He feels something in* LEM'S *pocket and whispers to* ANNIE LEE.) He's got some candy in his pocket!

(LEM *pulls out a paper bag of candy and passes it to* ANNIE LEE. *She offers him some*

but he refuses; she gives JACK *a piece and then forces him out of the room.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Timidly*)

Have you got over your scare yet?

LEM

I wasn't scared. I was just tryin' to convince you.

(JACK *has come back for more candy.*)

JACK

I believe I could stand on my head again, if I had another piece of candy.

(LEM *is now exasperated—quite.*)

ANNIE LEE

(*Speaking with authority*)

Jack, it's time you were in bed. (*Calling.*) Ma, why don't you put Jack to bed?

MA

(*At the door*)

Come on out of there, Jack.

(JACK *not minding her, she comes into the room after him and leads him out by the ear. He begins to cry and* ANNIE LEE *gives him the rest of the candy to quiet him. Now* PA *appears.*)

PA

Hush up that cryin', Jack. Mind your Ma.

(*He directs a meaning glance at* LEM *and retires. In the confusion the door is left open.* ANNIE LEE *slams it to.*)

LEM

Confound it! Every time the signs get right, something has to go and happen.

ANNIE LEE

(*They sit down and try again*)

Something has happened. I don't know whether to believe what you said awhile ago or not.

LEM

Drat it! I don't believe all the preachers in the world could make you believe that Jonah swallowed the whale. (*There is an awkward pause.* ANNIE LEE *feigns indifference.*) Well, if it's goin' to be like this, I guess I'd better go. (*Starting up.*) You and Ed done got it all fixed up, I reckon. . . . (*He gazes longingly at her.*) I better be goin' on. . . . I got to get up soon in the mornin'. Got to hold the governor-cords over the business end of an old jarr-head.* (*The mule brays outside.*) There's old Bob callin' me now. He knows when it's time to leave.

ANNIE LEE

'Tain't worth while to rush off. . . .

* This is the country way of referring to plowing with a mule.

LEM

Yeah. . . . I got to be goin' on. . . .

ANNIE LEE

(*Pursuing him*)

No, don't. Set awhile longer.

LEM

(*Relieved*)

Well, if you want me to.

ANNIE LEE

You ought to know I want you to.

(*He resumes his seat closer now to* ANNIE LEE *than ever before and takes her hand.* PA *pounds on the floor overhead.*)

LEM

I would like to convince you before I go.

(*Before she can reply* PA *pounds the second time.*)

ANNIE LEE

There's Pa again. I reckon you had better go now.

LEM

Yeah, I reckon I had better. . . .

(*He is loath to go.* ANNIE LEE *stands looking blankly at him. Then she has a brilliant idea.*)

ANNIE LEE

Wait! I've got an idea! Let's . . .

(She takes him by the hand and whispers something in his ear. He seems doubtful at first, glances at the window, then grins broadly, and strides heavily to the door.)

LEM

(In a loud voice)

Good night, Annie Lee.

ANNIE LEE

Good night, Lem.

(He is heard walking across the porch outside. She closes the door with a bang, goes to the window, raises it, and lets him in that way. He enters noiselessly, in his stocking-feet, carrying his shoes in his hand. They tiptoe back to their chairs.)

LEM

Well, Annie Lee, I guess we slipped one over on the old man, that time—if that blame mule will just keep his mouth shut. *(With suppressed laughter she picks up the shoes and is about to set them aside.* LEM, *however, makes for them.)* Better let me get into that pair o' gun-boats. I want to be ready to move off from here at about half-a-second's notice.

ANNIE LEE

But Pa might hear you movin' round. Hadn't you better wait?

LEM

Well, I better keep 'em handy, though.

(*He puts the shoes to the rear of his chair. They sit very close together now, talking in subdued voices.*)

ANNIE LEE

You never did get it done. . . .

(*He is about to kiss her, when* GIL *bounds up on the porch and breaks in on them. They jump apart.*)

GIL

Howdy, folks! What you-all doin'?

ANNIE LEE

Just talkin'—don't you want an apple?

GIL

(*Hilarious*)

Naw! I ain't got no more appetite than a snake's got tail-feathers. I just e't thirteen in a contest. I couldn't eat no more—that's the reason I came home so early. . . .

ANNIE LEE

(*Knowingly*)

I guess there was some other reason than that.—

But don't talk so loud, Gil. Pa said not to wake him up comin' in, and he thinks—

GIL

Say, you-all ought to have been at the candy-pullin'! We made some molasses candy and it didn't get hard enough, and—

ANNIE LEE

Oh, I guess you didn't boil it long enough.

GIL

Sure, we knew that, but we wanted to get to pullin' it. So Carrie and me, we—

ANNIE LEE

Gil, don't talk so loud! Pa thinks Lem has gone. He called bedtime on us so early to-night, that we decided to play a trick on him. You see (*pointing to the window and the shoes*) Lem said good night and went out with a whole lot of racket, took off his shoes, and —snuck back in again!

(*She checks* GIL'S *resounding laugh. He sees interesting possibilities in the shoes.*)

GIL

Well, if you-all are goin' to sit up much longer you better punch up the fire. I'm goin' to bed.

LEM

'Spect we had better, Annie Lee.

(*While they are poking the fire,* GIL *gets pos-*

session of the shoes, conceals them under his coat, and starts out with them.)

GIL

Good night, you-all.

ANNIE LEE

Good night.

LEM

Good—

(*She checks him by putting her hand over his mouth. He kisses it ardently.* GIL, *with the shoes behind him, chuckles and backs out of the room.*)

LEM

(*They are seated together once more*)

Gil made a lot of noise in here. Do you reckon your Pa heard?

ANNIE LEE

I hope not.

(*But* PA'S *heavy footsteps are heard coming down the stairs*)

LEM

Yes, he did, too!—Where are my shoes?

(*A frantic search is made.* LEM *is about to leave without them when* PA, *in his shirt-sleeves with one suspender down—apparently having dressed in some haste—appears in the doorway with the shoes in his hand. He has*

stumbled over them in coming down the stairs. LEM, *as a last resort, dashes under the table.* ANNIE LEE *covering him.*)

PA

(*Holding out the shoes*)

Who left these here shoes on the staircase? These here ain't Gil's shoes! And what in thunder was you and him raisin' so much Cain about? Didn't I tell you-all to be quiet? Did Gil go to bed?

ANNIE LEE

Yes, sir. . . . Gil went to bed. . . . Didn't you meet him just now? . . . I tried to get him to be quiet, but . . .

PA

Well, whose shoes is these?

ANNIE LEE

Why, I guess they're . . . they're . . . they're . . .

LEM

(*Coming out from under the table*)

They're . . . they're mine! I thought Gil hid 'em under the table. . . . I was just lookin' under there.

PA

Well. What the Sam Hill does this mean? I called bedtime long ago. Do you know what time it is? It's time everybody was at home in bed where

they belong. I thought you was gone, Lem. What you doin' back here?

(GIL *returns, grinning broadly.*)

LEM

Well, you see . . . you see . . . We hadn't quite finished . . . when . . .

PA

Hadn't quite finished! What the fire was you doin', then?

LEM

Yes, sir. You see, I was tryin' to tell Annie Lee—

PA

Well, why didn't you tell her and not take so dad-burn much time about it?

(MA *enters with her sewing in her hand.*)

MA

(*Going to* ANNIE LEE)

Now, Pa, don't be so hard on 'em. I knew all the time Lem hadn't gone.

GIL

(*Appearing on the scene too*)

They was waitin' for me to bring 'em some candy. I think they've got a sweet-tooth.

LEM

Yes, sir. I was just about ready to go, when—

(JACK *enters, in his nightgown now.*)

JACK

(*Rubbing his eyes*)

Papa, get me a drink of water.

PA

(*Pushing* JACK *in the direction of the water-bucket*)

Well, have you got anything more to say? If you haven't—

(*He throws the shoes dangerously near* LEM'S *feet and turns away.* LEM *gets into the shoes as quickly as possible.*)

LEM

(*In desperation now*)

Yes, I have got something else to say. I've been tryin' to say somethin' to Annie Lee ever since supper, but every time I get ready to say it somebody goes buttin' in. (MA *looks accusingly at* PA.) I wasn't aimin' to say it to anybody but Annie Lee, but . . . but . . . Well, listen and look! All of you! (*In spite of his determination to get it all said,* LEM *finds that the words still stick in his throat. He gulps, takes* ANNIE LEE *by the hand and makes a final effort.*) Annie Lee . . . I . . . do . . . love you. Will you marry me?

ANNIE LEE

(*She looks to* MA *for her approval;* MA, *beaming, nods her head, of course.*)

Uh . . . huh. . . .

(*Then he takes her in his arms and kisses her.*

1. Scene from *In Dixon's Kitchen*, a country comedy, by Wilbur Stout. LEM ISLEY (Lloyd Williams); ANNIE LEE DIXON (Mary Traill Yellott); JACK (George Winston); MA DIXON (Ellen Lay); HIRAM DIXON (Le Grand Everett, Jr.); GIL (Thornton Gholson).

LEM: Annie Lee . . . I . . . do . . . love you. Will you marry me?

2. Scene from The Carolina Playmakers' latest production of Wilbur Stout's comedy *In Dixon's Kitchen*, with an exterior setting. HIRAM DIXON (Shepperd Strudwick, Jr.); JACK (Charles Graham, Jr.); MA DIXON (Josephine Sharkey); ANNIE LEE DIXON (Helen Dortch); LEM ISLEY (Howard Bailey); GIL (Lawrence Wallace).

LEM: Did Annie Lee make these biscuits? . . . That accounts for me likin' 'em so well.

Photographs by Wootten-Moulton.

MA *is radiant.* JACK *giggles.* GIL *pretends to be surprised.* PA *says nothing, but grunts and starts out to take up his interrupted sleep. But upon second thought he turns for the final word.*)

PA

Well! That bein' the case, you better come around in the mornin' and . . . slop the hogs!

CURTAIN

A SHOTGUN SPLICIN'

A Mountain Comedy

By

Gertrude Wilson Coffin

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced at The Playmakers Theatre, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, March 30-31, 1928.

SAIREY-SAM MULL, *the acting postmistress,* Gertrude Wilson Coffin
FATE GADDY, *the mail carrier,* Charles T. Lipscomb
PINK GIBSON, *a loafer,* Walter Spearman
DICEY RADFORD, *a mountain girl,* Lois Warden
AMOS, *her brother,* Moore Bryson
SQUIRE BEN HARRISON BAYLES, *an aspirant for the State Legislature,* Edwin S. Day

SCENE: A roadway in front of the Fargo Post Office, in western North Carolina.
TIME: A day in midsummer, 1910.

THE SCENE

THE Fargo Post Office building is cheaply constructed of unplaned, unpainted planks (of the type known as "box house") placed vertically with two-inch strips covering the joints. The gable end faces the narrow, rocky road. At the extreme right of the front is a batten door, and a batten window is placed high on the left side. Both the door and the window stand open. The road is widened in front of the Post Office to allow for the passage of vehicles. To the left, a low rail fence adjoins the building, and a cluster of gay zinnias and sunflowers are blooming by it. Two rails, placed side by side to form the top of the fence, afford seats for those who arrive ahead of the mail carrier. Between the door and the window are tacked notices to tax-payers, and tin signs recommending "Smith's Mule Chewing Tobacco," "Sweetbread Tobacco," and "Dutch Snuff." In rather uneven letters "FARGO, P.O." *is crudely lettered on a board above the doorway. There is a home-made bench beneath the window, and a splint-bottomed chair is in the doorway.*

Inside, to the left, is a home-made cabinet containing lettered pigeon-holes for mail. Shelves line the opposite wall and hold a small stock of staple groceries, candy, tobacco, and snuff, supplemented by a few broken bolts of calico and cheap cotton cloth. To the

right of the Post Office is the hitching rack, but it is not visible to the audience.

PINK GIBSON, *28, is a shiftless, good-natured, man-of-the-neighborhood. His tanned hair and patchy pongee whiskers match his well-worn tan breeches, which are supported by "galluses," held in place by eight-penny nails where buttons are missing. A faded blue shirt echoes the washed-out blueness of his eyes. His hat, long since deprived of its band, has gone to seed and is now held to his head by means of a shoe string slipped through slits in the crown. His sockless feet are enclosed in brogan shoes.*

SAIREY-SAM, *56 (so named by the neighbors to distinguish her from a sister-in-law named "Sairey"), is the wife of a semi-invalid, Sam Mull, and mother of one daughter, Theodosia (called "Doshy") 16, who is her mother's standard of what every young girl should be. Her small cabin is just beyond the creek, but in view of the Post Office.* SAIREY-SAM *is decided in her views and caustic in her comments. Her body is thin, work-hardened, and a bit stooped; her streaky grey hair is drawn from a sharp, swarthy face into a knot on top of her head; steel-rimmed spectacles (with one lame side, wrapped with white string) sit on her long, sharp nose. Her dress is a grey calico with a black vine pattern. It is made with a tight basque bodice, joined to a full-gathered skirt, reaching down to her shoes. A black-and-white checked apron ties around her waist.* PINK *is sprawled out on the bench under the window, his gun and fishing pole stacked against the fence. He is chewing tobacco and whittling*

on a stick. SAIREY-SAM, *unaware of any one's presence, comes to the door and holds up a letter between her eyes and the sun. Her spectacles are set low on her nose and she peers over them, scrutinizingly.*

PINK

(*Without moving a muscle*)

Whar's hit from and who writ it?

SAIREY-SAM

(*Starting guiltily*)

Guess hit's Doshey's. A body never know'd you was here. Whar'd you come a-slinkin' in from?

PINK

Been up th' road a piece. (*Without rising, he turns and stretches his neck so that he can peep inside.*) Whar's Aunt Viney?

SAIREY-SAM

Her ol' neuralgy was so bad, she wasn't able to make it to-day. She axed me to tend the store. How fer up the road was you?

PINK

(*Indifferently*)

Eh? Wasn't so fer.—Got book-larnin' a-plenty to tend mail, hev you?

SAIREY-SAM

Shore, my folks gimme schoolin', an' I's able to

larn. Hain't a-measurin' t'other feller's corn in your half-bushel, air you? Think you're powerful smart, bein' so shet-mouthed 'bout whar you be'n.

PINK

Squair Ben a-hangin' 'roun' to-day?

SAIREY-SAM

Shore hain't. He's off some'ers a-speakin' 'bout the legislature. 'Lowed he'd a-been here a-fore this. Whut air you and Ben up to? Some devilment?

PINK

Mebbe. He's done gimme that money. (*Showing it.*)

SAIREY-SAM

(*Sneering*)

Somethin's wrong if Ben's a-throwin' away money. Le's see how big a piece it was.

(PINK *holds up a dime.*)

PINK

Thar hit is.

SAIREY-SAM

Lordy, onderstood you to say money. Jist a dime! 'Twas Ben give hit to you shore! Buyin' your vote ahead of election, air he?

PINK

Hain't nuther. Hit's fer puttin' them air signs up.

SAIREY-SAM

What-uns? Hain't seed nary-un.

PINK

A body never said you had. He was allowin' 'at Fate'd fetch 'em in the mail to-day—done got his beauty struck. His picture's goin' to be plumb smack at the head of ever' sign.

SAIREY-SAM

Lordy, you don't say. Allus was stuck on hisself. Makin' of him Justice of the Peace p'int-blank ruint him.

(*She starts inside.*)

PINK

Hit hain't.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Stopping*)

Powerful little you know 'bout hit, Pink Gibson. Hain't I been a-knowin' of him ever sence he's jist a shirt-tail' boy?

PINK

Got a good chanct o' book-larnin', I reckon.

SAIREY-SAM

(*She is sitting in the doorway now sewing*)

Jist enough to bodaciously spile a good field hand. Ef'n he'd a-been crippled up with white swellin' same as Leander's Amos, hit'd a-been 'scuse a-plenty to kept

from workin' an' a-bein' a preacher, or a man schoolteacher.

PINK

He's a purty good feller.

SAIREY-SAM

Brag on him 'at air dime's wuth. You've sot your head for him. (*Reminiscently.*) 'Tain't ary a grain of use for him to act biggety around whar I'm a-livin', for I've knowed his ol' daddy an' mammy afore him.

PINK

They's as good as . . .

SAIREY-SAM

Spit hit out—as we air. Yeah, an' they hain't no better. Cramped theirselves on victuals so's to give him a heap of schoolin'. A'ter he's got it, hain't done nothin' but run for the legislature.

PINK

Tain't no harm in that.

SAIREY-SAM

Nuther good. Ef he'd ever git thar. Jist a-usin' good tax money for nothin'. Ben's jist too big for his breeches. Ef'n he ever was to git elected, he'd act as big as the President. D'you say 'at he was a-lookin' for that bunch o' signs to come in on this here mail?

PINK

Fate's slow a-fetchin' the mail to-day, hain't he?

SAIREY-SAM

(*She turns to look at the clock*)

Reckon so. Hain't in no swivet to git back, air you?

(*She now resumes her sewing, which she had let fall into her lap during the conversation about* BEN.)

PINK

(*Still whittling*)

That feller 'lowed for me to hurry.

SAIREY-SAM

Plumb lost the little sense you's borned with.—Which feller?

PINK

(*Ignoring her question*)

Talkin' o' the ol' Booger Man shore will scare up his imps. (FATE *outside right, "Whoa, Beck."*) Thar's Fate tiein' old Beck to the hitchin' rack right now.

SAIREY-SAM

Yessir, he's jist a shammickin' on in.

(FATE *enters and* SAIREY-SAM *lays aside her sewing, ready to take the mail pouch, which he lets slide from his shoulders.* FATE GADDY, *thirty-five, is a long, lank, much tanned and weather-beaten mountaineer. His straight black hair and furtive eyes give him the appearance*

of an Indian. Two weeks' growth of black beard covers his face. He is dressed in blue denim overalls with a jacket to match, and wears a small, greasy, black felt hat on the back of his head.)

FATE

Hy, Pink.

PINK

Hy, yourself. Sorter late.

FATE

Yeah.

PINK

Train not a-runnin'?

FATE

(*Sullenly*)

Yeah, hit was a-runnin'. So was 'at air clock 'em devilish Sisk boys axed me to fetch up to their Granny. They gimme a bundle all wropped up, an' jist put hit in my haversack 'thout noticin' hit a-tickin' or nothin'. Pint in the middle of Gyarden Creek, whar ol' Beck was a-drinkin', the blamed ol' 'larm bell sot off and the huzzy wheeled and piled me off 'zactly in the aidge o' the creek. Hit never wet the mail-poke none. A'ter I'd run and ketched 'er, fernent the Company Store, I'se good and mad—and late. (*Ironically.*) Wait'n hain't throwed your craps back none, I reckon.

PINK

(*Good-naturedly*)

No, they hain't a-sufferin'. Whut's the news down in the settlements?

FATE

Never heerd none. Whut you know?

PINK

They's anuther young-un up on Little Hongry.

FATE

(*Interested*)

Whar 'bouts?

PINK

At Mag's and Leander's.

FATE

You're a-lyin', flat-footed, Pink. Their baby crap's done laid by. 'Sides, ef they'd been lookin' out, my mammy 'd a-heered it afore now.

PINK

So holp me God, hit's so. She brung hit in night afore last. Tain't sich a little-un; reckon hit's nigh onto two months ol'. Mam seed hit last night. They 'lowed the young-un had the thrash, an' sent for Mam to blow in hits mouth. Tain't Mag's. Hit's Dicey's!

FATE

(*Takes hold of* PINK *by the collar and leads him to-*

ward the fence so as to be out of ear-shot of SAIREY-SAM.)

Look-a-here, Pink. 'At's powerful low-down talk to be a-handlin'. Furthermore, Dicey hain't been home since last Christmas. She's a-stayin' at her brother Ranz's over in Transylvania, goin' to school.

PINK

Eh? You hain't nary excuse to git so fired up. (PINK *shakes himself free from* FATE'S *hold.*) I told you she got in night afore last. Garfield Rogers was in from Transylvania last night, with a load o' licker, and he 'lowed the daddy of hit was from over in here some'ers. Tain't a-steppin' on your toes, air it? Was you a-wantin' of her? Knowed you an' Squair Ben both used to spark her.

FATE

(*Turning away*)

Jist drap sich talk.

PINK

(*Striving for the last word*)

'Lowed she got fooled.

FATE

(*Threateningly*)

You're the fool. An' a blame, black-guardin' one, to boot. (*He walks toward* PINK, *shaking his fist in his face.*) Keep your blamed mouth shet. SAIREY-SAM'S mouth's allus a-waterin' for some tale to tell.

Now nary nuther word out'n you, or I'll bust your face.

PINK

I hain't a-braggin'. 'Tain't *mine.*

FATE

Cain't allus tell. Hit's a smart daddy 'at can tell his own young-un.

(SAIREY-SAM *steps to the door and peeps out, holding a bundle of letters in her hand. She calls to the men.*)

SAIREY-SAM

How come you-uns is a-squanderin' off thar? (*She comes out, and walks toward them.*) Come here, Fate. You can read writin'; holp me put up this mail.

(*As* SAIREY-SAM *goes to see why the two men have strayed from the porch,* SQUIRE BEN *comes in at the right.* BEN HARRISON BAYLES *is florid and resounding, approaching thirty. He has not yet settled on any definite work. Farming is too arduous—with pay-days far apart. Paucity of education bars him from becoming a man of consequence in the towns of his county. A lawyer is his idea of greatness, largely because he can exchange advice for cash.* BEN *has been very prodigal with advice. He wears dark, baggy trousers and a light, striped shirt. He props his foot on the porch-step, wipes his face with a large handkerchief,*

smiles broadly, and watches SAIREY-SAM *round up the men.*)

BEN

How're y'all? Aunt Vine got the mail up?

SAIREY-SAM

Lawsy! She hain't able to tend store to-day. Hit's my job. Jist a'ter Fate to holp me a-puttin' hit up. Step on in. 'At bundle o' your'n is a-layin' a-top o' that pile o' papers.

BEN

So them notices got in? Glad of that. Time they's tacked up over the country so the folks can see what a good-lookin' candidate they've got.

(BEN *laughs uproariously. The others exchange meaning glances.*)

SAIREY-SAM

Ef'n you's as good a hand to hoe, as you air to brag, your'n 'd be the biggest corn crap 'round here. (BEN *goes inside.*) Whew! Hain't hit a miserable hot day. Reckon hit's a-fixin' to rain. Sam's takin' on so all-fired bad 'ith that ol' lame arm o' his'n—'lows hit's a-hurtin' bad as hit done 'never'n them Yankees put the bullet thar.

FATE

They's a ol' Injun "doc" in town to-day, a-sellin' liniment 'at mought cyore 'im.

SAIREY-SAM

Dunno. Powerful juberous o' them peddlars. Them town doctors says nothin'll holp 'ceptin' cuttin' hit off, but Sam 'lows them town fellers is allus studyin' new ways to git a country feller's money. (PINK *is sitting on the fence.*) "Doc" Walton was by our house this mornin', and I axed him to leave some powders to make the ol' man so's he could sleep.

FATE

(*Quizzically*)

How fer up th' road had "Doc" been?

SAIREY-SAM

Up to Leander's.

FATE

Who's sick?

SAIREY-SAM

Ranz's folks come in from Transylvania night afore last, fetchin' a sick young-un. They sent fer "Doc," jist afore day.

FATE

Whose young-un was hit?

SAIREY-SAM

Hain't found out. Ranz's ooman was allus sickly, an' had no young-uns.

PINK

Hit's . . . D—D—D—

(*Stammering.* FATE *steps up to him and claps his hand over* PINK'S *mouth.*)

FATE

You shet up.

SAIREY-SAM

What'n the world's Pink a-stutterin' about?

(PINK *resumes his whittling.*)

FATE

Nothin'. (*He motions her aside.*) Acts as ef he mought a-been a-takin' a dram. Tain't no use to pay no 'tention to him.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Unconvinced*)

Don't 'pear no quairer'n allus to me. En ef hit's licker, some folks is libeller to tell the straight of a thing ef'n they've had a dram 'n ef they's dry as a bone.

FATE

Jist the same, he ort to be left alone. (*He goes into the store, talking as he goes.*) Come on, then. Got to pay me extry for puttin' up the mail, as well as totin' of hit.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Moving nearer* PINK, *but keeping her eyes on* FATE *as he disappears inside*)

I'm a-comin'. (*Crossing to* PINK.) Whut's you a-startin' to say?

PINK

(*Carelessly*)

Eh? Nothin' much.

SAIREY-SAM

You was so, and Fate got so almighty bossy. Know more'n you're a-tellin' 'bout that young-un.

PINK

(*Shifting his tobacco*)

Mebbe. An' you're a-wantin' to larn more'n you're a-hearin'.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Indignantly*)

Keep it to yourself, Mr. Biggety. They's a-plenty as kin git news sides you, and tell hit a sight straighter.

(FATE *pokes his head out of the window.*)

FATE

'Pears as ef your swivet to fix this here letter mail has done wore off. (*He chuckles.*) Ben's jist as happy as a toad under the drip o' the house, a-lookin' at them pictures o' his'n.

SAIREY-SAM

Bet ef he tacks ary'n on the front of the store, hit'll scare the Boogers off. Aunt Vine'll need nary yard-dog.

(SAIREY-SAM *goes in.* BEN *brushes against her in the doorway as he comes out with a roll of posters under his left arm. He holds one up for inspection and hands the rest of them to* PINK. *Selecting a most auspicious place, he tacks one of them up on the wall, driving the tacks with the back of his knife. Then he steps back a bit, to see if it is well-placed.*)

BEN

Look all right, Pink?

PINK

(*Spitting and discarding his tobacco simultaneously*) Cain't read them words. Your picter looks natural enough to eat pie.

(SAIREY-SAM *comes out to investigate the hammering.*)

BEN

What's your judgment?

SAIREY-SAM

Never seed the day 'at you looked as good as hit. Rared back like you is the only favorance. (*Looking closely at the reading matter.*) Lordy massy, hit says: "To THEM DIMMICRATS!" Come here, Fate. Jist read them words—"Dimmicrats!" They's Radicals 'round here got four-year-old, and two-year-old younguns called a'ter him. Ef'n I'se them Radicals, I'd change every last one of 'em to Roozyvelt. Hain't

money enough to hire me to name a dog for a turncoat.

(*Meanwhile* FATE *has ambled out, with letters in both hands, to inspect the notice.*)

FATE

(*Turning to* BEN)

Them fellers 'at fixed the signs has got it mixed and put your picter top o' the wrong readin', I reckon, Squair. Shore, you hain't quit us.

BEN

(*A bit crestfallen*)

It's just that-a-way. Studied everything out, Fate, and here's how hit is. The Dimmicrats naturally got us beat for numbers in this county. No way to whip 'em, 'cept to run on their ticket, land in the legislature, put the laws we favored over on 'em.—Good iron bridges, so's you and your mule can cross the river dry-shod! (*He waves his hands becoming oratorical.*) Taxes spent right here at home—not all at the towns down to the lower end o' the county! Too many loopholes in th' law!

FATE

'At's shore the way of it.

BEN

Big bunch o' meanness goes on. The law's too easy on the evildoers. When my turn comes t' make laws,

I intend to make it hard on them 'at's not peaceable and law-abidin'.

FATE

Yeah. Orter work 'at-a-way.

BEN

Now when the law handles a feller, and finds him guilty, he gets off too light. Takes good tax money to put him through the courts, too. Work 'em on the roads, ef'n they cain't pay a fine, is my ticket!

FATE

Squair, ef you'd not a-switched to the Dimmicrats, I believe you'd a-been a good-un to 'lect.

SAIREY-SAM

Heap of us has seed water toted top o' two shoulders afore this. Heap o' book larnin' hain't for doin' a-body no good, 'less'n his principles air right.

BEN

Why, Sairey, they hain't enough schools. When our boys and girls grows up, jist fryin' size, they marries off, 'cause our schools are so short. Some of the smartest ones has to leave home and study. Take that little brown-eyed girl of Leander's—smart as a whipcracker in school; her folks lacked money to send her off to Asheville—I lent her money myself. Transylvany's schools beats our'n.

FATE

Be keerful 'at you hain't a-braggin' too quick. 'Sides, wheelin' to the other crowd was a pretty lousy trick.

PINK

'Less'n you could git a passel o' cash for changin'.

FATE

In generally, they's money passes hands.

SAIREY-SAM

Lordy, hain't that the way of it?

BEN

(*Disgustedly*)

Now listen at ye—doubt ef hit's worth the trouble to try to help folks to do better by theirselves. Ef you-all 'd read your papers more, you'd see how I could help you out with schools and taxes. (*To* SAIREY-SAM.) My "Toledo Blade" come in on this mail?

SAIREY-SAM

Yeah, hit's in thar. (BEN *goes in to get his paper. She takes* FATE *by the sleeve and leads him toward the door.*) Let's stick this here passel of letter-mail up and git time to set an' talk.

(DICEY *comes in from the left and walks quietly up to* PINK, *surprising him. She is barely seventeen and pretty; demureness is connoted by the rustic simplicity of her dress, yet*

the toss of her head shows the superiority youth feels for society's laws. Her oval face is framed by dark hair, braided and tied back with a pink ribbon. Roguish eyes look out from beneath a limp Leghorn hat, trimmed with pink roses. Her organdie dress is worn long and has three ruffles at the bottom of the skirt. Dusty white shoes and stockings reveal her imitation of the summer tourists.)

PINK

(*Sitting up*)

Howdy, Dicey. Like for the world not to a-knowed you.

DICEY

How're you, Pink? Mail in?

PINK

Puttin' hit up.—Well, Dicey, how'd you like hit over in Transylvany?

DICEY

All right, but everything's lookin' mighty purty on this side o' the mountain.

PINK

Hit shore is.

DICEY

(*She closes her umbrella*)

Sure want to see Aunt Vine. (*Looking inside.*) Where is she?

PINK

Hain't here to-day. Sick. 'Lowed you might a-been a-wantin' to see Fate.

DICEY

(*Blushing*)

Aw, hush. Is she bad sick?

PINK

Reckon she hain't liken to die. Sairey-Sam's a-gittin' her fun out'n the mail and a-seein' what's a-goin' on.

DICEY

(*Drawing back*)

She in there? I don't want to see her. Doshy, too?

PINK

(*Shaking his head*)

Huh-uh. Jist Fate and Sairey-Sam a-puttin' the mail up. Orter be 'bout done. Squair Ben sulled up and tuk hisself in thar to read.

DICEY

(*Wistfully*)

Wisht I had time to run out to the house and see Doshy, but I got to hurry on back.

(FATE *comes out of the door, cramming some small packages into his coat pocket, and producing some cheese and crackers.*)

FATE

C'm on, Pink. Let's go. Nary a grain o' need a-settin' a-mutterin' to yourself.

PINK

Hain't a-mutterin'. Purty company.

FATE

(*Glancing up quickly and seeing* DICEY)
Blessed ef hit hain't— Howdy, Dicey.
(*Extending his hand;* DICEY *takes it.*)

DICEY

Howdy. She ready to wait on me?

FATE

Yeah. Step right in.
(DICEY *goes to enter the store, but meets* SAIREY-SAM *bustling out.*)

SAIREY-SAM

Lord, hit's Dicey. Heerd you-uns was in.—You're lookin' awful peak-ed.—Whose young-un was hit that "Doc" was a-tendin' on? Ramsay's tuk a young-un to raise? How come you hain't answered me? Cat's got your tongue?

PINK

Two-legged cat!
(BEN *comes out, reading his newspaper.*)

SAIREY-SAM

Looky, Ben, here's Dicey.

BEN

(*Overdoing the welcome*)

Hit's a fact. How are you, little girl? Lookin' fine!

(*He extends a pudgy, moist hand, which she is slow to accept.*)

DICEY

Miss Sairey, I'm in a hurry; could you wait on me?

SAIREY-SAM

Shore. 'At's what I'm here for. What's your hurry? Hain't a-borrowin' a chunk o' fire on a hot day as this'n, air you?

DICEY

No, ma'am.

(*The two go inside.* FATE *starts toward his mule.* PINK *rises and brushes the whittlings off himself, as if he, too, might consider leaving.* BEN *takes* PINK'S *seat on the bench, burying himself in his newspaper.*)

PINK

(*To* BEN)

'Peared as ef she wasn't overly proud to see you.

FATE

(*Eating cheese and crackers as he goes*)

Reckon I mought as well rack on towards home. Le's go, Pink.

PINK

(*Sitting down on the steps*)

Eh, what's your hurry?

FATE

(*Glancing toward the western sky*)

Hit's a-comin' a plumb gully-washer ef'n them black clouds ain't a-sidlin' around Cole Mountain, and I hain't a-cravin' two wettin's the same day.

PINK

Ye hain't salt, nuther sugar. Ol' widder-men's allus a-thinkin' how sweet and purty they air, hain't they?

FATE

With some folks hit's a sight easier to git the secont ooman than to git the fust un.

PINK

Them as I want I cain't git, and them as I can git the Devil wouldn't hev. Gimme a chaw of sun-cyored?

FATE

(*Shakes his head, and dives deep into his pockets*)

Plumb out. Got some store terbaccer. (*He reaches*

into his coat pocket.) Hain't, nuther. Jist a seegar one of them town fellers gimme. Bite ye a chaw off the end of hit.

(*He extends the cigar toward* PINK *who waves it aside.*)

PINK

Uh-uh. Hit's as dry as rabbit terbaccer.

FATE

Hain't ye a-goin' with me?

PINK

My tradin' hain't done, yet. (*Insinuating.*) 'Lowed as how Dicey mought walk a piece o' the way with me.

(SAIREY-SAM *and* DICEY *reappear in the doorway.* DICEY *is carrying a small package wrapped in very yellow paper.*)

DICEY

Doshy at home? I'd sure love to see her.

SAIREY-SAM

Yeah. Doshy's a-settin' right thar a-piecin' quilts. She can imitate every quilt pattern she's seed, clean down to them picters in the papers. Whar you was so smart in your books, she was good to work. Proud you can drap by to see her.

DICEY

Thank you.

(*She walks on toward the right.* FATE *hesitates a moment, then joins her. The two stroll*

off together, leaving PINK *pop-eyed and* SAIREY-SAM *astounded.*)

PINK

(*Extending his dime to* SAIREY-SAM)

Gimme a nickel's wuth of store terbaccer and a nickel's wuth o' Franch mixture candy.

SAIREY-SAM

(*She takes the dime absentmindedly, her eyes still following the two retreating figures*)

Hain't that the beatinest sight! I knowed Fate was a-lookin' out for a secont wife! Jist the same as t'other-uns. He'll git tuk in with a purty face and figger and pay nary speck o' 'tention to a gal smart to work.

PINK

Reckon they's a-sparkin'?

SAIREY-SAM

Yeah. And her a-lettin' on that the young-un was a-needin' 'at air Castoria so bad. Nary a grain o' sati'faction 'd she gimme 'bout that young-un.

PINK

(*Cryptically*)

Hit's *her'n!*

SAIREY-SAM

(*Drawing in her breath sharply*)

You hain't a-tellin' hit! Well, hain't she fixed her-

self?—Allus a-takin' on about 'er bein' so smart for book-larnin'.—Who'd she lay hit to? The brazen piece, walkin' in to see my Doshy! I'm goin' straight atter 'em!

(*She reaches for her bonnet and starts off.*)

PINK

Come back here with 'at dime o' mine. 'Sides, you cain't git away from the store. 'Pears as ef I seed a feller a-comin'.

SAIREY-SAM

A-ridin' or a-walkin'? Ben could tend the store tel I git back.

(BEN *has been shading his face and pretending to read.*)

PINK

(*To* BEN)

Reckin you'd heerd 'bout the young-un?

BEN

Folks can be put in the penitentiary for slander; Fate's mighty foolish about her.

SAIREY-SAM

What air *you* so 'mazin' techous about?

PINK

(*Looking off left*)

Hoppin' Amos is a-bilin' down the road a-foot.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Shading her eyes with her hand*)
He shore air a-single-footin'.

PINK

Yeah. He's a-kiverin' ground. (*To* SAIREY-SAM.) Gonna gimme my terbaccer and candy.

SAIREY-SAM

Take your ol' dime ontil I git back in the store. (*She hands it to him.*) Act as ef you're awful rich, a-spendin' for candy and store 'baccer.

PINK

Hoppin' Amos was scan'lous mad about Dicey's young-un. Wantin' to marry 'er off. He was a-takin' on wuss ner Leander and Mag. Reckon hit's becase he's a preacher.

SAIREY-SAM

Who's he a-splicin' 'er to? Amos ort to see that his own blood sister acts right, or his preachin' ain't wuth nothin'.

(AMOS *enters as fast as he can. He is twenty-five, but appears much older. His hatchet face is sallow, with deep-set eyes. When he walks he sways to the right because his right leg is smaller and much shorter than his left. He is dressed in a blue work-shirt and corduroy pants, tucked into the tops of his teamster's boots—a well-worn rush hat is set on the side of his head. As he draws up and rests his crippled*

leg on the bench, he wipes the perspiration from his face with first one sleeve and then the other. He takes off his battered hat to fan himself with it. After catching his breath he speaks haltingly.)

AMOS

'S awful warm.

SAIREY-SAM

Lord, who wouldn't be sich a swultry day as this, ef he had two good legs stid of one and a piece lak your'n, and a-hittin' the grit like you was. Startin' off some-'ers to hold a meetin' an' skeer the ol' Booger Man?

PINK

Bet Amos could out-run him.

AMOS

I hain't got to hunt the Booger Man—'cause Hell's bust loose up at our house!

SAIREY-SAM

Whut ye a-runnin' for? Wouldn't a-been much hotter to a-stayed thar than you got a-tearin' off from hit. Hit's a Lord's blessin' that ye air one o' them as c'n slide from grace stid of them as is allus stuck *in* grace, Amos. Here ye go, put' nigh a-cussin' never'n you've been made a jack-leg preacher.

AMOS

(*Gasping*)

Sairey, hit wasn't intended for cussin'.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Dubiously*)

Hit wasn't? Boys, hit 'peared pow'ful as ef ye was a-ticklin' the ol' Booger Man in the ribs, didn't hit? Some preachers air made of awful warpy timber.

AMOS

Ary un seed Dicey?

SAIREY-SAM

Yeah. Dicey's been here for Castoria. Stid of tearin' on back home, her and Fate traipsed off towards my place, 'lowin' she was a-wantin' to see Doshy. Ef that talk that's a-goin' around here is the straight of hit, she ort to be spliced to Fate, and no time lost.

BEN

(*Laying aside his paper and showing interest for the first time*)

Sairey is exactly right. That's another law that ought to be stricter. Ef you had the license I could perform the ceremony right here to-day.

AMOS

(*Pulling a packet from his pocket*)

Got them papers! 'Spicioned Fate of hit. Borrowed Jake's ol' fast-steppin' bay mule and rid to town for this very pair of licenses yisterd'y. 'Lowed I'd find you-uns all here 'bout mail time. Sent Pink here to hold you.

BEN

Ef we had more good citizens like you, this country would need fewer laws.

SAIREY-SAM

Ben's that buttery-mouthed hit might-nigh makes me sick at the stummick. Course he's a-wantin' your vote. Don't differ ef you're a Dimmicrat or a Radical, he'll take ary vote he c'n git, and he'll need 'em all to git to the legislature. Hurry on, Amos, an' fetch 'em back.

PINK

(*Drawling*)

I'm a-needin' of that terbaccer and candy.

SAIREY-SAM

(*To* BEN)

Go in thar and weight out half of this here in candy, and t'other half in terbaccer.

(BEN *goes into the store.*)

AMOS

Gimme your squirrel rifle, Pink, so's I c'n git the drap on him ef he shows fight.

(*He takes up the gun and hops off down the road to the right.*)

SAIREY-SAM

Travelin' is so slow for Amos. You'd ort to went stid o' him, Pink. Cain't you holp him go quicker?

PINK

(*Slyly*)

Dunno. Mought sick my ol' dog, Sank, on him.
(*He whistles, as if setting a dog on him.*)

SAIREY-SAM

Idyot! That hain't a-goin' to cyore his short breath.

PINK

Ef that's a-pesterin' you, there's longer-winded ones ne'r me a-standin' their tracks.

SAIREY-SAM

Hit's a sight pitifuller to be crippled in the head 'n to be lame in the legs.

PINK

Aunt Sairey, you put me in mind of a ol' rattlesnake in a coil * jist a-wantin' to strike everything a-passin'.

SAIREY-SAM

Quit a-auntin' me, Pink Gibson. I ain't no kin o' your'n. Reckon Amos hain't a-goin' to run a-foul o' no trouble gittin' 'em headed this-a-way sence he tuk your rifle? Fate's pow'ful muley 'never he sets 'is head agin a thing. He'll shore argy 'bout hit.

PINK

Hit's nary use a-argyin' ef t'other feller's a-totin'

* Pronounced kwile.

ammynition. Amos was het up bad 'nough to a-fetched 'em by main stren'th and awk'ardness.—Yander they air. Bound to a-met 'em, for they hain't been left long enough to miss 'em.

SAIREY-SAM

Lordy, hit's so. Amos' dander's up. He's sot for a weddin'. Ben, fetch yourself and Pink's sweetenin' on out here.

(BEN *comes out and hands the bag of candy and a slim slice of plug tobacco to* PINK. *He appears nervous, brushing imaginary specks of dust from his clothes, and clasping and unclasping his hands.*)

BEN

(*To* SAIREY-SAM)

Where's the best place for 'em to stand?

SAIREY-SAM

Better leave the say-so to Amos. He's the law.

(*The wedding procession enters, with* DICEY *plainly rebellious and* FATE *sullen.* AMOS *is enjoying his armed determination.*)

AMOS

(*Crossing down to the left and keeping the gun leveled at the middle of* FATE'S *back*)

Pink, step around here and git the papers from my hip-pocket, and pass 'em over to Ben.

PINK

(*He is now eating his candy vociferously*)

Busy. Let Sairey git 'em.

(SAIREY-SAM *gets the papers with alacrity, and hands them to* BEN, *who takes his place before the two intimidated ones and begins the ceremony. Suddenly* DICEY *breaks ranks.*)

DICEY

Take that gun off of Fate, Amos. Guess I'm in trouble for the rest o' my life, but I won't lie. (*She points at* SQUIRE BEN.) It's *him!*

PINK

(*Gulping down the last pieces of candy*)

Gimme back my gun, Amos. I'd love to turn hit loose on Ben, myself.

(*He acts quickly, strangely for him, and pushes* BEN *into the bridegroom's place, freeing* FATE.)

SAIREY-SAM

(*Snatching the license from* BEN'S *hands and thrusting it at* AMOS)

You're a pore chanct for a preacher—mighty nigh a-cussin'. But mebbe you c'n tie a knot that won't slip.

DICEY

(*Resolved*)

I won't have him!

Scene from *A Shotgun Splicin'*, a mountain comedy, by Gertrude Wilson Coffin. PINK GIBSON (Walter Spearman); SAIREY-SAM MULL (Gertrude Wilson Coffin, THE AUTHOR); AMOS (Moore Bryson); SQUIRE BEN HARRISON BAYLES (Edwin S. Day); DICEY RADFORD (Lois Warden); FATE GADDY (Charles T. Lipscomb).

DICEY: Take that gun off Fate, Amos. I may be in trouble for the rest of my life, but I won't lie.

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton.

AMOS

(*The license shaking in his hand*)
Whut you got to say about hit?

DICEY

(*Conscious of victory*)
Ever'thing. (*Quavering.*) I love Fate.

SAIREY-SAM

(*Explosively*)
Eh, Lordy! Hain't that jist like a ooman!—Jist the same, that pair o' licenses was allus Fate's. Nary a grain a good for Ben.

FATE

(*Relishing his release at first but warming toward* DICEY *appreciably after her declaration in his favor, he sidles awkwardly up to her side.*)
Sence you hain't *a-makin'* me git spliced, I want you-uns to know that Dicey's jist the one I been a-lovin'. I allus have craved to marry 'er. Glad to git 'er, ef she'll have me—but I hain't a-goin' to raise Ben's young-un!

AMOS

(*Exuberantly*)
That's all right. Me and Pa and Ma'll be proud to keep the little-un. (*He goes up to the sign bearing* BEN'S *picture, spits on it, tears it down, and tramples on it. Then, laconically*): 'Druther have a bastard in the fam'ly than a damn' legislater!

CURTAIN

LIGHTED CANDLES

A Tragedy of the Carolina Highlands

By

Margaret Bland

(Written in collaboration with Louisa Duls)

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced at The Playmakers Theatre, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, February 10th and 11th, 1927.

EFFIE, *a young mountain woman,* Enita Nicks
MAME, *her mother,* Josephine Sharkey
ZEENIE, *her aunt,* Anita Darling
MOTE, *her lover,* Charles T. Lipscomb
BROTHER WAKECASTER, *a mountain preacher,* Hubert Heffner

SCENE: A mountain cabin in a remote valley of western North Carolina.
TIME: The present. An evening late in November.

THE SCENE

THE scene is a remote valley of western North Carolina—the plain room of a mountain cabin, which serves as both living room and kitchen. On the left is a huge fireplace in which a hickory back-log is smouldering. There is an old-time clock on the chimney place. A pile of logs is on the floor near by. There is no furniture other than a table in the center of the room and several splint-bottom chairs. A tall curtained box at the right serves as a cupboard. There is a liquor jug on the cupboard, and two candles set in pottery candlesticks. An unlighted oil lamp is on the table. The cooking pots and pans hang on nails in the wall. The only pictures in the room are several "Prominent Society Women" (cut out of the weekly newspaper) and a framed motto, gilt-edged and blue-flowered—"GOD BLESS OUR HOME."

The outside door is in the rear wall at the right, and there is a single window, unshaded, at the left. A door on the right side leads into the only other room of the cabin—the bedroom.

MAME *and* AUNT ZEENIE *are sitting before the fire, smoking their short clay pipes with evident satisfaction. They are typical middle-aged mountain women, fair of complexion but rather faded looking, somewhat bent by hard work, stolid, and conspicu-*

ously unanimated. AUNT ZEENIE *is taller than her sister, slightly more prosperous in appearance, and of more commanding manner.*

AUNT ZEENIE

Law, Mame! You an' me a-settin' here jes' like common, an' hit's Effie's weddin' day.

MAME

I hain't quite able to believe hit yit.

AUNT ZEENIE

She did hol' out agin Mote powerful long. What made her give in d' you reckon?

MAME

I dunno. Hit was the young-un dyin' maybe. She might a-felt like she didn't have no more claim onto Jake, and him not comin' nor a-writin' her a line in five year. Then the craps was a-gittin' poorer. . . . We couldn't a-got on much longer without a man.

AUNT ZEENIE

Is she still got a notion Jake ain't dead?

MAME

I couldn't say for certain. She's been so quare about him—settin' up evenin's waitin' for him, and puttin' candles in the window nights, so as he could see to come up the path ef he was a-comin' home.

AUNT ZEENIE

Suppose'n Jake 'd come now after she's married to Mote!

MAME

Ef he hain't showed up in five year, he hain't likely to show up now. He's dead, or he would have come back long ago.

AUNT ZEENIE

Hit allus did puzzle me what got into Jake to go way out West, him with a ooman like Effie and a young-un not more'n a few months old.

MAME

I never did put no trust in that man Jake. He was allus that restless. I wasn't wantin' Effie to marry him to begin with, but, law, she didn't have no eyes for Mote or nobody else, as long as Jake was here.

AUNT ZEENIE

Mote's steadier'n Jake. He'll make you-uns good craps; Billy Burnett says thar hain't a better worker in Mitchell County'n Mote.

MAME

I'm hopin' things'll be easier for us now, and that Effie'll brighten up a bit.

AUNT ZEENIE

Is she still takin' on 'bout that young-un?

MAME

Not no more. She took on powerful when hit died. Went down to the graveyard and talked to hit same as hit was livin'. I got sort o' scared she was gittin'—(*she indicates her head with a knowing look*)—teched. But she don't do no more wild talkin' now, jes' works without never sayin' nothin' nor smilin' nuther. (MAME *goes to the bedroom door.*) What's keepin' Effie so long, I wonder? Law, she hain't put her dress on yit—she's jes' a-settin' thar moonin', lookin' out'n the window.

AUNT ZEENIE

Mote'll make her perter than common. Gittin' a man allus sets a ooman up.

MAME

Mote do set a store by Effie. He's been askin' her steady now for nigh onto three year with her a-hol'in' out agin him all the time, till yestiddy. She took a notion sudden yestiddy, and said she'd have him.

AUNT ZEENIE

(*Looking at the clock on the chimney place*)
What time did Mote 'low he'd git here this evenin'?

MAME

Long 'bout five or after. Preacher Wakecaster wouldn't come no sooner. Said he couldn't be marryin' folks in the daylight, and his corn a-needin'

hoein'. (*Calling* EFFIE.) Come on out, Effie, and I'll button your dress.

(EFFIE *comes into the room. She is a frail young woman of twenty-three with soft brown hair and blue eyes. There is a strange remote look in her eyes. Her sensitive face registers expressions of varying emotion, in contrast to the unchanging stolidity of her mother's.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

Howdy, Effie.

EFFIE

Howdy, Aunt Zeenie. Didn't know you was comin'.

(EFFIE *comes slowly over to her mother, who gets up to fasten her dress.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

Yes, Brother Wakecaster don't like to do no marryin' less thar's two witnesses anyway. So I 'lowed I'd come over. Thought I'd take your Ma home with me for the night after hit's over, so as you an' Mote kin have the first evenin' to yerselves.

EFFIE

(*Dully*)

We'll be havin' years and years of evenin's to ourselves.

MAME

(*Pulling at* EFFIE)

Stan' round this way to the light so as I kin see to button you straight.

AUNT ZEENIE

(EFFIE *is facing the fireplace now*)

Law, you're lookin' purty, Effie—purty as you did t'other time you was married.

EFFIE

(*Quietly*)

Twa'n't no other time. I only jes' dreamed hit. Twa'n't no Jake; I only jes' dreamed him too. Twa'n't no young-un neither, no little Jake to hol' in my arms an' talk to 'bout his pa in the West. He ain't dead 'cause he hain't never been. I was only jes' dreamin' him too.

(MAME *crosses to her chair by the fire.* EFFIE *goes away to the right.*)

MAME

Now, look here, Zeenie. Don't go a-talkin' to Effie 'bout the las' time she was married. Hit upsets her, that's what hit does. Hit's time for her to forgit what's gone and to think about what's comin'.

EFFIE

I've forgot hit, Ma. Thar hain't no past. Thar's jes' the now. Jes' the meadows as has to be mowed, and the animals as has to be fed, and the craps as has to be planted. Thar hain't no Jake no more, or no little Jake; jes' you an' me.

MAME

And Mote.

EFFIE

And Mote. . . .

AUNT ZEENIE

Mote's a powerful good man, Effie.

EFFIE

He hain't Jake.

MAME

Now, look here, Effie. Don't be a-talkin' that way.

AUNT ZEENIE

Jake's gone, and he's dead more'n likely. And you're gittin' up in your twenties. When a ooman gits up in years, any man's better'n no man.

MAME

Mote'll be kind to you, Effie.

EFFIE

Yes, he'll be kind to us, and he's a good worker.

AUNT ZEENIE

(*Standing now before the fire*)

Course he's sort o' slow but he's a powerful man once he gits het up.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

(*Outside*)

Whoa! Lazarus!

(AUNT ZEENIE *goes to look out of the window.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

Law, Mame, ef'n hit hain't Mote and the Preacher.

MAME

(*Hovering over* EFFIE)

Pull yer ha'r out a bit more fluffy-like, Effie. And go back in t'other room, Effie. Hit's bad luck for the groom to see you 'fore time for the weddin' to begin.

(EFFIE *goes back into the bedroom.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

Have you got a drink o' licker for Brother Wakecaster?

MAME

Hit's in the cupboard along with the weddin' supper I done cooked up for 'em. (*A knock sounds at the door, and she crosses over to the fireplace.*) Pull the latch and push the door!

(PREACHER WAKECASTER *and* MOTE *enter. The Preacher is a man of fifty or more, huge of stature, with a bald head, and with bristling moustache. He is unkempt in appearance, but he has a kindly air toward every one, and a genial smile. On Sunday, he strikes terror to the hearts of his congregation by his eloquent descriptions of Hell-fire and Damnation, but on Monday, he would hesitate to frighten a chipmunk in his field. Beside him,* MOTE *appears to be a man of much less force. He is powerful of body. His face bespeaks slowness*

of thought and of emotion, once aroused. He speaks little. The greetings are cordial at their entrance. PREACHER WAKECASTER *enters first;* MOTE *hangs back a little awkwardly.* MAME *puts another log of wood on the fire.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

(*Shaking hands with him*)

Howdy, Brother Wakecaster. How air ye?

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Stout as common, stout as common, thank ye, Zeenie! But when a man is gittin' old like me, thar hain't much for him to do but pray the good Lord to make his last days easy.—Howdy, Mame, air you purty pert?

(MAME *steps forward, wiping her hands on her apron, and shakes hands with the Preacher.*)

MAME

(*Nudging him and chuckling*)

Only jes' middlin', Brother Wakecaster, only jes' middlin'.

AUNT ZEENIE

Howdy, Mote, an' wishes for your happiness. You're gittin' a fine ooman.

MOTE

Howdy, Aunt Zeenie. Howdy, Aunt Mame.

MAME

Howdy, Mote. Hit's time you was callin' me Ma now 'stead of Aunt Mame. I'm powerful proud to have you for a son-in-law.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

But whar's the bride? Too modest to come out—waitin' like a Lily o' the Field till she's sent for? Go bring your daughter out, Mame. Bring her out to this here joyful occasion!

MAME

She's 'bout ready, I reckon. I'll go see.

(*She goes into the other room.*)

AUNT ZEENIE

Why don't you-uns set? We-uns'll be back in no time.

(*She follows* MAME.)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

(*Seating himself by the fire*)

Well, I reckon settin's cheap as standin'. They might keep us waitin', them oomans. (PREACHER WAKECASTER *puts his satchel on the floor, draws out his Bible, and stretches himself comfortably.* MOTE *continues to stand, awkwardly staring into the fire, warming his hands.*) Hain't you goin' to set, Mote?

MOTE

Reckon I'm not.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Did you git the license?

MOTE

Uh-huh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

You got hit with you?

MOTE

(*Feeling in his pocket*)

Uh-huh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

You're joyful, hain't you?

MOTE

Uh-huh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Cain't you say nothin' 'cept "uh-huh"? I hain't never seed such a cheerless bridegroom. Man, this here hain't no funeral. Hit's a weddin', and hit's your'n. (*Pointing to the other room.*) Thar's a Rose o' Sharon waitin' for you in yander. Did you know hit?

MOTE

Uh-huh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Lord, Lord, Mote! I believe ye're gittin' narvous, hain't you?

MOTE

(*Shaking his head*)

Nuh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Not jes' a little bit narvous? Not jes' a bit shaky in the knees?

MOTE

No, I tell you! I hain't narvous. . . . I'm damned scared!

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Courage, man, courage! Jes' one word and she's your'n. That Lily of the Valley; that apple tree among trees of the wood; that Rose o' Sharon—her that's got lips like a thread o' scarlet; her that's like a young roe on the mountains of Bethel!—That's in the Bible, did you know hit, Mote?

(*He spits in the fireplace.*)

MOTE

Nuh. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

(*Resuming his seat*)

'Tis. All about ol' man Solomon when he got married to his wife—to his wives! Lord! He knowed how to make love, ol' man Solomon did; but he was

a wise 'un, he was a wise 'un was ol' man Solomon. (MAME, ZEENIE *and* EFFIE *now return.*) Thar she is, lookin' purttier'n a picture. Thar she is—a Rose o' Sharon, I tell you. Lord, Lord, ef'n I was as young as you, Mote, you wouldn't a-had a chanct. Don't tell the ol' ooman on me, but I can't help sayin' a compliment to a beautiful young lady. (PREACHER WAKECASTER *goes to meet her.*) Blessin's on you, my dear; blessin's on you! You're gittin' yer a fine man this day, a fine man, I'll tell you!

EFFIE

(*Staring at him intently*)

Brother Wakecaster, do you believe . . . do you believe Jake's dead?

AUNT ZEENIE

Law, Effie, be quiet! Don't start that.

MAME

I might a-knowed somethin' 'd go wrong at the last minute. Don't ask him nothin' like that, Effie.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Hit's all right, Zeenie. Hit's all right, Mame. The child wants to be right in her own min' that she hain't goin' ag'in' the will of the Lord. Why, the Good Book says that ef'n any man can show just cause why they should not be lawfully j'ined together, let him speak now or forever after hol' his peace. An' she wants to be right in her own min', don't you, Effie, child?

EFFIE

(*Softly*)

Yes, Preacher Wakecaster.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Effie, he hain't been nigh you in five year, an' he hain't wrote you in five year, an' he hain't never sent you no money; so, Effie, in the eyes of the law you're as free as a widow.

MOTE

(*Drawling*)

I asked the sheriff. He said 'twas all right; an' the clerk sol' me the license, he said 'twas all right.

EFFIE

But, Brother Wakecaster, do you believe he's dead?

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Of course, of course! Ef'n he warn't dead he'd a-been back long ago. Are you ready to begin the ceremony?

(PREACHER WAKECASTER *puts down his Bible on the table.* EFFIE *picks it up and holds it out to him.*)

EFFIE

Brother Wakecaster, you say he'd a-been back ef'n he hain't been dead. Will you swear to me on this Book that you believe hit's true?

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Thar, thar, now, Effie. I don't min' sayin' hit's true, 'cause I believe hit's true; but I'll be blamed ef'n I want to say hit's damned true!

EFFIE

(*Going over to* MOTE *at the fireside*)

Mote, do you believe he's dead? Mote, would you solemnly swear to me on this Book that you believe he's dead?

MOTE

Effie, do you reckon I'd want to take you for my ooman, a-thinkin' all the time he was a-livin'?

EFFIE

(*Resigned*)

I reckon not.

MOTE

Are you satisfied?

EFFIE

Yes, Mote.

(*She gives the Bible to the Preacher, who holds the Book open before him during the ceremony.*)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Let's get on with this thing. Let's get on with this thing before hit turns dark. Mame, are you ready? Zeenie, are you ready?

MAME AND ZEENIE

Yes, Brother Wakecaster.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Well, let the wedding party take their places. Take your places everybody. The bride ought to be on my right, and the bridegroom on my left, an' a witness on each side. You stand right here, Effie; Mote, you thar.

(*In taking their places,* ZEENIE *goes to the Preacher's right by* EFFIE, *and* MAME *goes to his left with* MOTE.)

MAME

Law, I want to be standin' by my own gal! You come over on this side, Effie.

AUNT ZEENIE

Let Effie stay whar she be. You change with me, Mame.

(MAME *and* ZEENIE *exchange places.*)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Everythin's sot, everythin's sot. The ceremony will now begin.—The Good Book says that God created ooman to be a helpmate to man. (*Reading from the Bible.*) "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." Mote, wilt thou have this ooman to be thy lawfully wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Answer, "I will."

MOTE

I will.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Effie, wilt thou have this man to be thy lawfully wedded husband to live together after God's ordinance in the Holy Estate of matrimony? Answer, "I will."

EFFIE

I . . . I will. . . .

PREACHER WAKECASTER

J'in your right hands. (*They do so.*) Those whom God hath j'ined together, let no man put asunder. For as much as Mote and Effie have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before this here company, I pronounce them man and wife.

(*During the ceremony* PREACHER WAKECASTER *pronounces each word slowly and distinctly, accenting the long words on the last syllable. During the prayer, all bow reverently.*)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

(*With his hands uplifted*)

Oh, Lord, pour forth thy blessin's on this man and this ooman. Let the light of the countenance be upon them as they go through this life together. Keep them in health and prosperity, and make them long to live for the doin' o' thy will. Amen.

(*There is silence for a moment.* MAME *and* AUNT ZEENIE *wipe their eyes furtively.*)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

(*Cheerfully*)

Kiss the Preacher first, Effie! (*He kisses her loudly, then shakes hands with* MOTE. *Then* PREACHER WAKECASTER *crosses over to* MOTE *by the fireplace.*) Congratulations, Mote! Congratulations! I'm 'feared you've sort o' out-married yourself; but try to live up to her, man; try to live up to her.

(MAME *and* ZEENIE *kiss* EFFIE *and go to shake hands with* MOTE.)

AUNT ZEENIE

Law, Mame, ef'n you hain't forgettin' Brother Wakecaster's licker!

(EFFIE *is now seated at the right of the table, and* ZEENIE *is comforting her.*)

MAME

Law, Brother Wakecaster, 'scuse me, but I'm that excited. Mote, would you keer for a drap yourself?

MOTE

Don't keer ef'n I do.

(MAME *hurries to the cupboard, pours out two glasses of corn liquor, and gives one to each of the men.* MOTE *gulps his down nervously, but* PREACHER WAKECASTER *surveys his glass,*

Scene from *Lighted Candles*, a tragedy of the Carolina Highlands, by Margaret Bland. EFFIE (Enita Nicks); ZEENIE (Anita Darling); PREACHER WAKECASTER (Hubert Heffner); MAMIE (Josephine Sharkey); MOTE (Charles T. Lipscomb).

PREACHER WAKECASTER: I hain't averse to hit. I hain't averse to hit! The Good Book says that wine maketh glad the heart!

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton

smacking his lips, and wiping his mouth with due ceremony.)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

I hain't averse to hit! I hain't averse to hit! The Good Book says that wine maketh glad the heart. Don't forgit to sign the license, witnesses. We want to git these young-uns hitched up proper!

MOTE

(*Pulling the license from his pocket*)
Here's the license.

AUNT ZEENIE

I'll do the signin', Mame. Your mark and mine. You git your things quick and mebbe Brother Wakecaster'll give us a lift as far as the holler.

(ZEENIE *takes the license from* MOTE *and goes to the table to sign it.*)

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Sure, Mame, come along with me. Come along with me. Me and my ol' mule Lazarus'll be plumb proud to have you both. (*Examining the license and directing* ZEENIE.) Right here, Zeenie, right under my name. (*Raising his re-filled glass.*) I drinks to your health, my children.

(MAME *goes into the other room and returns almost immediately, with her hat on, and a package in her hand. She goes to* EFFIE *and kisses her affectionately.*)

MAME

Good-bye, Effie. Good-bye, my little gal. (EFFIE *is frightened and clings to her mother.*) You know your weddin' supper's in the cupboard and I'll be back in time to git breakfast for you in the mornin'.—Good-bye, Mote.

AUNT ZEENIE

(*At the door*)

Good-bye, Effie. Good-bye, Mote.—Come along, Mame, don't let's keep the Preacher waitin'.

PREACHER WAKECASTER

Good-bye, my chil'ren, good-bye. I was plumb tickled to hitch you-uns up; and I'll be right on the spot ef'n thar is any baptizin' to be done!

(*He laughs heartily and follows* MAME *and* ZEENIE *out.* EFFIE *is still sitting at the table, staring into the fire.* MOTE *stands awkwardly by the door for a time, then closes it.*)

MOTE

Hit's gittin' dark, Effie.

EFFIE

(*Without looking up*)

So 'tis.

MOTE

Whar's the matches, Effie? I'll make a light.

EFFIE

On the chimney place.

(MOTE *crosses to the fireplace, finds the matches and lights the lamp. He stands close to* EFFIE, *waiting for her to speak; but she does not turn. He tries to speak gently to her.* EFFIE *glances at the window.*)

MOTE

Effie, you hain't kissed me yit.

EFFIE

No, not yit. . . .

(*He bends over her, and she lifts her face slightly. He kisses her with reverence, almost fearfully—as if she were a crucifix.*)

MOTE

(*Gently*)

You are my ooman now, Effie. . . . You'll be happy with me, won't you, Effie?

EFFIE

(*In a dead voice*)

Yes. . . .

(MOTE *crosses to the fireplace and sits there in silence.*)

MOTE

Effie, would you keer ef'n I took off my shoes?

EFFIE

No. . . .

MOTE

(*Proudly, as he unties the shoes*)

Them's new shoes—new shoes I bought in Spruce Pine this mornin'—special for the weddin'. (*He stretches his stocking feet out before the fire.*) But I hain't used to weddin' shoes. They kind o' pinches. (*He continues to warm his feet at the fire, glancing furtively at* EFFIE *from time to time. She is silent.*) Hain't you kind o' hungry, Effie? I am.

EFFIE

(*Rousing herself*)

Law, Mote, 'scuse me. I hain't give a thought to fixin' you no supper. I'll git hit now.

(*She gets up, a trifle dazed, and goes to the cupboard to get the supper her mother has prepared for them.*)

MOTE

Tain't no matter, Effie. I'll have more appetite when hit is ready.

EFFIE

Ma left the milk in the spring-house. Would you git hit, Mote, while I fix the table?

MOTE

(*Pulling on his shoes*)

Whar's the pitcher?

EFFIE

(*She brings the pitcher to the table and hands it to* MOTE)

Here 'tis.

MOTE

(*Going to the door*)

Spring-house locked?

EFFIE

No, hit's open.

(*He goes out, carrying the pitcher.* EFFIE *sets the liquor jug on the floor. She takes down the two candles from the cupboard and places them on the table. She lights them, holds them up a moment. Radiant, she takes them to the window and stands looking out into the dark. She cries out, "Jake, Jake!" lifting the candles high. Then she puts them down on the window sill and remains a moment in silence, looking off.* MOTE *is heard returning, and she hurries back to the table and goes on with the preparations for supper.*)

MOTE

(*With the pitcher of milk*)

Here 'tis, Effie. (*He puts it down on the table and goes back to the fireplace. Then he sees the candles burning in the window.*) We don't need them candles, Effie—the lamp's enough.

EFFIE

They're purty.

MOTE

Law, yes, but hit's wasteful.

EFFIE

They don't burn down much in one evenin', an' . . . an' I likes lighted candles.

MOTE

Well, so long as hit's our weddin' day, we can afford to be festive, I reckon. But so long as we've got 'em lighted we ought to have 'em on the table, 'stead of in the window—'cause that's whar we'll be a-settin'.

(*He starts to get them from the window.*)

EFFIE

Let 'em be, Mote! Let 'em be!

MOTE

They'd look jes' as purty on the table, Effie; and they'd be a sight more useful.

(MOTE *moves a step nearer the window.* EFFIE *stands between him and the candles.*)

EFFIE

Don't, Mote! Don't!

MOTE

What's got into you, Effie? I don't like your

damned candles burnin' in the window. You seem to have some creepy notion about 'em. Why don't you want 'em moved? (EFFIE *is silent.*) Well, ef'n you hain't got no reason you can tell, I don't know no reason.

(*He takes the candles from the window and places them on the table.*)

EFFIE

(*Pleading*)

Don't, Mote! Don't!

(*She takes up the candles gently, places them back in the window, and stands between them and* MOTE *as if to protect them.*)

MOTE

Well, why hain't I to move 'em?

EFFIE

Mote, hit's jes' a notion o' mine.

MOTE

(*Suspicious*)

Is that notion o' your'n 'bout . . . Jake? (*She does not answer.*) Effie, are them candles burnin' for Jake? (*She nods reluctantly.*) I hain't goin' to have no candles burnin' in my windows for Jake. Hit's time for you to forgit Jake. You're my ooman now. (*He seizes one of the candles and blows it out.* EFFIE *shrieks and replaces it.*)

EFFIE

Don't, Mote! Don't! I don't mean no harm. Hit's jes' that I've been a-doin' hit for five year now —havin' a bit of a light in the window so as he could see to git home ef'n he was comin' up the path.

MOTE

I hain't goin' to have no candles burnin' in my windows to light a dead man home to a ooman that's mine.
(*Fully determined now, he goes to get them.*)

EFFIE

(*Screaming and pushing him away*)
Don't you blow out them candles. Don't you *dast!*

MOTE

I hain't a-goin' to have them candles burnin', I—
(*He is about to extinguish them.*)

EFFIE

Don't you blow hit out, Mote. Hit's all I got—jes' one little notion—that's all that's left me o' Jake.

MOTE

I don't want you to have nothin' left you of Jake—not even a notion. You're married to me, now, to *me!*

EFFIE

Ef'n you blow out them candles I'll leave you, Mote—I swear I'll leave you. I'll leave you to-night. I'll leave you now!

MOTE

(*He pushes* EFFIE *violently away and blows out the candles*)

You can't leave me. You're mine. (EFFIE *begins setting the table again.* MOTE *strides sullenly down to the fireplace.*) You needn't fool with no plates. You've riled me so, I hain't a-wantin' to eat now. (*He stalks to the door, bolts it and comes down to the bedroom.*) Come on, Effie, you hear me?

EFFIE

Yes, Mote. . . .

MOTE

Hain't you comin'?

(*There is a silence.*)

EFFIE

I . . . reckon. . . .

(*He goes in, glancing back at* EFFIE, *and closing the door after him.*) EFFIE *picks up a dish from the table, absentmindedly, but it falls from her hand with a dull thud. . . . She looks toward the bedroom, hesitates, then strikes a match and lights one of the candles. . . . She realizes what she has done. . . . With a fixed determination she lights the other candle. . . . Then she places them again on the window ledge. . . . She takes her shawl and wraps it about her shoulders, and starts to leave. . . .*

She hesitates at the door, then comes down in the direction of the bedroom. . . . But shudders and turns away. . . . She goes back to the chair by the table and drops down into it helplessly, staring before her. . . . Then her face becomes luminous. . . . The candles are still burning in the window as

THE CURTAIN FALLS

QUARE MEDICINE

A Country Comedy of a Quack Doctor

By

Paul Green

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THE CHARACTERS

As originally produced at The Playmakers Theatre, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, November 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th, 1925, on the occasion of the Dedication of the Theatre.

OLD MAN JERNIGAN, Claudius Mintz
HENRY JERNIGAN, *his son,* E. R. Patterson
MATTIE JERNIGAN, *Henry's wife,* Helen Leatherwood
DOCTOR IMMANUEL, *a patent-medicine vendor and cure-all,* Charlie Gold

SCENE: The sitting-room of the Jernigan farmhouse in eastern North Carolina.
TIME: Several years ago, at the close of a winter day.

THE SCENE

THE scene is the combined sitting-room and bedroom of the JERNIGAN *house, with a fireplace to the left, a sewing-machine to the right and a table in the center of the room. The floor is carpeted with bright straw matting, and everything bristles with tidy primness. A door is at the center back and one at the left rear. The window at the right center, neatly curtained, shows a streak of sombre autumn fields filling up with the blue dusk of a fading winter day. From another part of the house the voice of a woman can be heard shrilly singing "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying." The elder* JERNIGAN *walking with a stick, comes carefully in at the rear door shivering with cold and carrying a mug-cup in his hand. Below a mass of white hair his face shines out like a ruddy apple, and his whole person suggests the toughness and durability of a dried hickory root. Half-way across the room he stops and listens to the singing.*

JERNIGAN

(*Sharply imitating*)

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying!"

(*He moves over to the fire and sets his mug to warm; after which he takes a bottle from the mantel, pours out some medicine in a spoon and*

swallows it. He sits down and stretches his hands to the blaze with a grunt of satisfaction. In a moment he feels the cup and takes a long drink. The woman's voice calls from off the right.)

VOICE

Father!

JERNIGAN

(*Starting*)

Ah-hanh! What is it?

VOICE

(*Nearer*)

Father—fath-er!

JERNIGAN

(*Moving towards the door at the left*)

What is it, Mattie?

VOICE

Supper's 'bout ready. Where's Henry?

(*The singing begins again, fading towards the kitchen.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Calling futilely after her*)

He's feeding up and'll be here in a minnit. (*He listens awhile and then reseats himself thoughtfully before the fire. Presently there is a heavy scraping of feet on the steps outside and* HENRY JERNIGAN *comes timidly in at the rear. He is a big awkward farmer*

of thirty or more, hesitating and shy. He takes his seat silently and wearily in a rocking chair, being careful not to touch the whitewashed hearth with his feet. The old man looks at him closely.) Tired out, ain't you? Hyuh, try some o' this 'simmon beer, I jest dreaned the barrel.

HENRY

(*In a slow, fumbling voice*)

I don't want none o' that, I believe.

JERNIGAN

Unh-hunh. (*They both lapse into silence, staring before them. Soon the elder* JERNIGAN *peers through the window at the winter sunset.*) Gonna be cold, Henry, cold. Robins been flying towards the south all day. (HENRY *says nothing.*) You're tireder'n common, ain't you, Henry?

HENRY

Yeh. (*Lifelessly.*) Wore out, wore out.

JERNIGAN

(*Taking his bottle from the mantel*)

Hyuh, take this last dost of Doctor 'Manuel's tonic. (HENRY *shakes his head.*) Well, I will then. (*He pours out the last drop and swallows it.*) Doctor said he'd be by to-day. 'Bout night and he ain't hyuh yit. You better git him to give you something, ye better, Henry, you're looking thin, thin.

HENRY

He ain't no doctor, he's a humbug.

JERNIGAN

Lard help my life!

HENRY

Wonder that mess don't kill you—old branch water and chemicals he's mixed up, I betcha. (*He sighs heavily, listening to the song in the kitchen.*) That old man's crazy with poetry and talking and medicine!

JERNIGAN

Hunh, not hardly. (*Solemnly.*) 'Tain't body tired what ails ye, Henry, is it? (*After a moment he jerks his thumb in the direction of the song.*) Still singing, Henry. There it is.

HENRY

Yeh, I know.

JERNIGAN

Ah-hah, but folks will marry jest the same. She's worse'n ever, Henry. Good she is, religious good. Cooking and sewing and scrubbing and all fixed up fer to-night. Look over there on the machine at what she's got finished fer them there Hindoos or whatever they are. There's my coat I bought in Dunn five years back at Old Man Ransome Taylor's sale!

HENRY

(*His eyes travelling heavily about the room*)
What's she got on fer to-night?

JERNIGAN

Another one o' them there meetings. Old Mis' Pate and her gang's coming hyuh to sew fer the heathen and them that's starving over in the Old World. (*Staring at him intently.*) This religious mess is gonna kill Mattie off ef you don't git up manhood enough to stop it. Sing and talk, sing and talk, Lard, I cain't stand it no more.

HENRY

I—I cain't—I ain't gonna put my authority on nobody. She's her own boss.

JERNIGAN

Own boss! She's her own boss and our'n too. Well, ef you're scared of her, all right. They ain't no help fer it. (*He turns towards the fire, patting his foot forlornly on the floor.*) But, Henry, ye ain't gittin' no fun out'n living, and right now's the time ye ort.—And as fer me—I been wanting to talk—(*hitching up his chair*)—to you 'bout this. Why the name o' Old Scratch you don't up and putt down yer foot I cain't see. (HENRY *says nothing.*) But ye won't. (*Half to himself.*) He ain't got no backbone, lets everybody run over him. (*He reaches for his cup and drains down the last of his beer in an angry gulp.*) Ye didn't git that from yer mammy ner from me, Henry. (*He mocks the singing in the kitchen*): "Rescue the perishing—"

HENRY

(*Suddenly standing up*)

I cain't have no row with nobody, not with her nohow, I tell you. (*At the door.*) I got to go part the cow and calf.

(*He slams the door behind him and the old man jumps in astonishment.*)

JERNIGAN

Dinged ef he didn't slam the door—hee, hee, hee. Good fer you, Henry, good fer you!

(MATTIE, *a fair-faced young woman, comes in from the left, singing and carrying a stone churn in her arms. Despite her housewifely certainty of action, there is an indefinite feminine frailty about her.*)

MATTIE

What's good for Henry?

JERNIGAN

(*Hurrying in confusion to his chair*)

Nothing, Mattie, nothing at all.

(*She looks sharply at him a moment and then sets the churn by the hearth.*)

MATTIE

I'm putting the milk here to turn. I wisht you'd look at it every now and then and stir it with the dasher.

JERNIGAN

All right, Mattie, all right.

MATTIE

And mind, don't you spill none o' that old beer on the hearth.

JERNIGAN

I won't, Mattie, I won't.

MATTIE

What'd Henry go out for?

JERNIGAN

To git the calf away from the cow.

MATTIE

(*The words piling out*)

I bet he didn't wipe his feet when he come in. And did you? (*Staring at the floor and following* HENRY'S *trail.*) No, he didn't—just look at the dirt, just look at it. (*She hurries into the room at the left and returns with a broom sedge broom.*) Here, sweep it up, Father. (*She pushes the broom into his hand.*) I've got to go back to my batter. (*She sticks her head out of the door at the rear and calls.*) Henry—Hen-ry! Supper! (*She turns back into the room and old* JERNIGAN *falls to sweeping.*) Sweep it towards the hearth, towards the hearth, Father, and mind the milk, don't git it full of dust. (*She goes out singing, beginning where she left off*)—"from sin and the grave—"

JERNIGAN

(*Sweeping*)

Lard, Lard A'mighty, was ever martel man so persecuted! (*Leaning on his broom and musing.*) There he is—(*nodding his head to the right*)—pore soul, not at peace in his own household, going about like a man with the mulligrubs, cain't eat, cain't sleep, worried, worried down to the ground. And there she is—(*nodding to the left*)—reading the "Christian Herald" and hearing about dirt and disease and famine over in Azhy till she ain't fit to live with. Listen to her, listen to her, will you? What's to become of me, Old Moster only knows. What, to come to this, to this in my old age and me—(*thumping on his chest*)—yeh, me, old and with a crippled leg from marching in Furginny! (*He wipes his sleeve across his eyes and goes back to sweeping. Presently he stops and begins to muse again.*) Putts me to sweeping, she does, and churning and gitting up the eggs, and following old setting hens around. And she's had me at the wash-tub like an old woman, she has. Damn it! (*His voice sags over the oath.*) I ain't no woman. If Henry ain't got the grit to say something, I have. It's "Father do this, Father do that, Father—Father—Father!" But ding it all, she's a good girl. It's that drot'n old bellcow of a Bella Pate and her gang what's got her worse'n she ever has been. I wisht a starm would come up and blow the whole shooting-match of 'em clean to Roosia or wherever it is. Then they'd git enough o' them there heathen, I reckon. But they ain't got no right to interfere with me, not a bit. (*He puts a hand into*

his pocket and holds up a small tin box in his left hand and a plug of tobacco in his right.) Here they come and set 'pon me about my tobacco. Chew chewing-gum, chewing-gum, they say, to save fer the heathen and to pertect my health. (*He rattles the tin box.*) And I've chewed that wad o' stuff till I cain't git rid of it in my sleep. Cain't wear it out, cain't by no means. I'm done of it, I am. Have to slip off and hide to chew my tobacco, and all in a land of freedom. (*He stands thinking, then goes to the door at the left and calls.*) Mattie, air ye busy?

MATTIE

Yes, I've got my hands in the dough!

JERNIGAN

All right. (*He stealthily bites off a chew from his plug, drops his tin box in his pocket and spits in the fire with grim happiness. Just as he is leaning to spit a second time, the door opens suddenly at the left rear, and* MATTIE *comes in with a cloth.* OLD JERNIGAN *draws back, and begins sweeping in a fury of embarrassment. He calls out testily.*) Thought you was busy. Ain't I doing all right?

MATTIE

Sweep it clean, Father. I forgot this cloth for the churn. (*She raises the lid from the churn and stirs the contents around with the dasher.*) It's all right and ready, lacking just a bit for churning. Don't you let it slosh on anything while you're a-churning it.

(*She wraps the cloth around the handle of the dasher. The old man is sweeping and watching her out of the corner of his eye. While she is bent over she sees something on the hearth that attracts her attention. She rises up to her height and with a sharp note in her voice turns upon him.*) Mr. Jernigan—

JERNIGAN

Nah, nah, Mattie.

MATTIE

Signs don't lie, and there's signs of it there on my hearth. (*Working around the room and watching him furtively.*) Right here in my front room! Ain't you got your mouth full of tobacco right this minute? (*He shakes his head.*) Yes, you have, yes, you have. (*She stands looking at him as he sweeps.*) Father, why don't you say something, cain't you talk? (*He makes little movements of agony and finally chokes.*) Yes, yes, you are chewing right now. Spit it out, spit it out! Don't stand there and swallow that juice, it'll kill you. (*In desperation he runs to the fireplace and explodes into the fire, and stands coughing with a nauseated look on his face.*) I'll get you some water! (*She hurries out and reappears immediately with a glass of water and a battered wash-basin full of claying material.*) Here, drink it, and take this pan and rag and clay the hearth over. (*After drinking the water, he ruefully gets down on his knees and begins work. She goes to the machine.*) Hurry and get it done, I got supper nearly cooked. (*She sits down and begins singing, "How firm a foundation—"*)

JERNIGAN

(*Indicating the garments*)

Air they fer the heathen?

MATTIE

They are that.

JERNIGAN

(*Timidly*)

'Course you know best, I reckon. But how you know they wear britches over there?

MATTIE

(*Staring at him in amazement*)

Who ever heard of folks not wearing britches! You know they'd put 'em in jail for such, if they didn't.

JERNIGAN

(*Venturing*)

I hearn they don't wear nothing over there but a string around their waist to tell where the middle is.

MATTIE

(*Pedaling furiously*)

You men don't care, of course, care 'bout nothing but your farming and your crops. Why, it's in the "Christian Herald" where the little children just go through the woods in big droves gnawing the bark off of the trees they're so hungry. We've decided to give up our breakfast and send the cost of it to them.

JERNIGAN

That's why you didn't eat breakfast this morning. Well—you e't a whole lot more fer dinner to make up fer it, didn't ye?

MATTIE

(*Sharply and with a nervous note in her voice as she gets suddenly up from the machine*)

Father, take all this mess out when you get done—that old 'simmon beer cup, and that old 'Manuel patent medicine bottle, and don't forget to carry the clay pan out.

(*She goes out at the left. Her song is heard rising in the distance.* OLD JERNIGAN *continues claying the hearth, muttering to himself.* HENRY *comes in at the rear.*)

HENRY

(*Stretching his legs carefully towards the fire*)

What's the matter with the hearth *now?*

JERNIGAN

(*Setting the pan in the corner by the wood-box*)

Nothing, nothing, Henry. She thought she saw a speck on it somewhere.

HENRY

You must a-been chewing tobacco ag'in.

JERNIGAN

Well, why shouldn't I chew?

HENRY

Yeh, yeh, I wisht you could in peace.

JERNIGAN

You'd be better off ef you'd go back to chewing.

HENRY

I know. But I promised her I'd quit and I have.

JERNIGAN

I used to chew it 'fore it quit raining in Africky or wherever it is and 'fore old Bella Pate brung her sanctified self around here, I did, and they was some joy in having a far then, and some reason for having a farplace too. (*Tapping on the andiron with his stick.*) That's what it's made fer—to spet in.

HENRY

(*Timidly and somewhat hopefully*)

Why don't you talk it out with Mattie? (*Earnestly.*) I wisht you would.

JERNIGAN

Durned ef I didn't come purty nigh telling her something a while ago. (*He catches* HENRY *by the arm.*) Now look-a-here, Henry, you'n me's got to do something. The thing for you to do is to walk down the road to-night and meet Mis' Pate and them folks and tell 'em they cain't come up here to carry on no prayer-meeting and sewing business. Tell 'em to go som'r's else. Tell 'em to go to—hell!

HENRY

(*Shrinking away*)

I cain't do that, I cain't. Lord, you're near 'bout gone to cussing.

JERNIGAN

And tell 'em yer wife ain't gonna have nothing else to do with sich.

HENRY

(*Quickly*)

I tell you what, you do it.

JERNIGAN

I would in a minnit, Henry, but you're the head of the house and you better. It's yer place to.

(HENRY *turns himself about before the fire.*)

HENRY

Mebbe they won't come to-night, and before they meet another time mebbe we can figger on something to do.

JERNIGAN

Hunh, they'll be hyuh, all right.

HENRY

(*Staring off*)

I hear they's mad dogs about. One bit Dick Ryall's child this evening.

JERNIGAN

(*Studying*)

Well, that may break up the meeting, but I won't believe it till I see it, not me. Take more'n mad dogs to stop religion. You stand up to Mattie, I tell you, putt the britches on and wear 'em yourself. Lard, I cain't understand you. Why you let her impose on me in my old age the way you do I cain't see.

(*He turns away and sits down in his arm-chair.* MATTIE *comes in with a tin bucket in her hand.*)

MATTIE

I've got to go across the field to Mis' Ragland's a bit. (*Suddenly stopping.*) Henry, go right back out that door and wipe off your feet.

HENRY

(*Mumbling*)

I thought I cleaned my feet.

(*He goes outside and is heard scraping his shoes on the edge of the porch.*)

MATTIE

Sweep it up, Father. (*He gets the broom and sweeps.*) I got to borrow some soda from Mis' Ragland and she wanted me to bring her a jar o' jam.

HENRY

(*Coming back into the room*)

I'll go over there for you, Mattie.

MATTIE

No, I'll go, and you-all go on and git your supper. I've put the biscuits in the stove, and they'll be ready by the time you wash and get to the table. Now, Henry, don't let them biscuits burn.

(*She goes out.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Scornfully*)

Jest look at her—didn't have a bit o' business over there, jest wants to go over and see what old Nonie Ragland's got made up for the heathen. Henry, you got to lay down the law, I tell you.

HENRY

Yeh, yeh.

JERNIGAN

Now, I'm gonna talk straight to you. Women is like mules and all dumb brutes, Henry, you got to break 'em 'fore they'll work.

HENRY

Nah, nah, I cain't do that.

(*There is a knock on the porch.*)

JERNIGAN

Who kin that be? (*Happily.*) That's my doctor, I betcha.

(*The knock is repeated at the door.*)

HENRY

(*Raising his voice in sudden irritability*)

Go on away! Go way!

JERNIGAN

(*Staring at him*)

What— Come in, come in! (DOCTOR IMMANUEL *comes in.*) I knowed it was you, Doctor. I knowed it was you.

(*The* DOCTOR *is a man of medium height, about fifty years old, dressed in a cheap threadbare dark suit, celluloid collar and dark tie. His coat hangs low and nearly to the knees, clerical-like. Despite his cheap dress there is an indefinable air of distinction about him; something scholarly, something forlorn in his pale clean-cut face and dark piercing eyes. He carries a well-worn medicine case in his hand. As he enters the door, he pulls off his derby hat, disclosing a huge mop of long black hair streaked with gray and resting like a bolster on his neck and shoulders.*)

DOCTOR

(*In a deep level voice*)

Masters of this house, friends—

JERNIGAN

(*Pushing up a chair*)

Come right in, come right in and make yourself at home.

(*The* DOCTOR *lays his hat on the bed at the right and puts his case in a chair. He moves in a sort of dream-like, mask-like manner, intent upon his business and paying little attention to the two men.*)

DOCTOR

(*His voice moving in a level chant, half-singing as he opens the case*)

What can I do for you to-night? What can I do for you to-night?

(*He takes out bottle after bottle, shakes it, squints at it towards the light, and replaces it, chanting as he does so.*)

As you all know, wherever I go,
My name is Immanuel,
I treat you well, I make you well,
Sound as the sweet church bell.

(*He turns suddenly on old* JERNIGAN *who starts back in surprise.*) Now what is it, brother? What can I do for you?

JERNIGAN

(*Fetching the bottle*)

Another bottle. I just drunk the last.

HENRY

(*Growling*)

Another bottle of stump water, dish water, rain water.

DOCTOR

(*Holding up the bottle*)

Doctor Immanuel's Universal Remedy! Right it is and very fit. Distilled from secret weeds and herbs by mystic processes. Cures internal ailments, cuts, burns, bruises, is an antidote for poisons, can be taken internally or externally. For swelling in the joints, leg sores, sore throat, convulsions, dizziness, fits, and general disorders. (*The words roll from him in a flood. He turns towards* OLD JERNIGAN, *fixes him with his eyes, and suddenly sings out.*) What is your trouble, brother? Are you healed, better or— It's cold to-night, cold to-night, and ice on the pools in the lane.

JERNIGAN

In my knee, you remember, in my knee. (*He slaps his hand to it.*) I'm getting better, doctor, slowly, slowly.

DOCTOR

(*Holding his hand up in assurance*)

Slowly but surely, certainly, absolutely. Another bottle and you walk straight as any man.

As you all know, wherever I go,
My name is Immanuel,
I always make you well,
As any man will tell. . . .

(*His voice drops to a whisper and he hums under his breath, the while he is putting away the empty bottle and getting out another. He hands the bottle to* OLD

JERNIGAN.) The price is one and a quarter now, brother. Prices have gone up, prices are going up. The demand exceeds the supply. (*Again he chants.*)

I travel from morning till night
Curing and fixing things right.
From night until day
I'm on a-my way—

(*He begins placing his bottle back in his case.*)

Seeking the saddened sight—

(*Again he whirls upon the old man.*) Is the knee all that troubles you? Have you other troubles, diseases of the body or the soul?

JERNIGAN

(*Shaking his head quickly*)

Nanh, nanh, I'm all right saving my knee.

DOCTOR

(*Picking up a small bottle and holding it lovingly before him*)

Now here is a remedy, *the* remedy, the heart and soul of the matter, the help for the world's evils. Down in Egypt, the country of darkness, it was discovered. Dug out of the tombs of the powers of evil. Hid away they had it, but my agent discovered it, sent it to me, here it is. (*Reading.*) Dr. Immanuel's Egyptian Tonic. (*Suddenly barking like an auctioneer, as* HENRY *jumps in his chair.*)

Two dollars a bottle, two dollars,
Going at two dollars.
Are you weak and heavy laden,
Sore distressed, sad distressed?
It will cleanse of evil passion,
Restore you bowels of compassion,
Accidents, diseases chronic—

(*Shouting.*)

The marvelous Egyptian Tonic.

(*He sticks it out at* OLD JERNIGAN.)

Two dollars once, two dollars twice—
Going at two—

JERNIGAN

(*Backing away from him as he fumbles in his pocketbook for his money*)

Nanh, nanh, this bottle's enough. Here's your dollar and a quarter. (*The* DOCTOR *takes the money impersonally.*) Come up to the fire and warm yourself.

HENRY

(*Looking at* OLD JERNIGAN *significantly*)

Anh-hanh, what'd I tell you? (*The* DOCTOR *closes his case and goes to the bed for his hat.* HENRY *calls to him bitterly.*) You better look out down in that creek for mad dogs.

DOCTOR

(*Turning back quietly but with dignity*)

Mad dogs?

HENRY

Yeh, dogs that are mad. Mad dogs. One of 'em bite you and you'll be madder'n you are now.

JERNIGAN

Yeh, you git bit and you'll foam at the mouth and gnaw bedposts and cut up terrible like Sarah Williams done 'fore she died. She run out in the yard and screamed, and they tried to ketch her but she run off and lay down by the hedgerow and died biting her legs and arms and barking like a dog.

DOCTOR

(*Quickly taking a tiny package from his case*)

Doctor Immanuel's Mad Stone, good for all bites and poisons. Bring it near the afflicted spot and it seizes upon it—(*clapping it to the top of his hand*)—and sucks out the poison. Five dollars apiece, five dollars. (*Gazing at it in cold fondness.*) This mysterious stone was taken from the belly of a bewitched deer, killed by the old prophet of the Cape Fear. (*Barking again.*) Five dollars apiece, five dollars, going at five dollars.

(*He pushes the stone quickly out at* OLD JERNIGAN.)

JERNIGAN

Nanh, nanh, I ain't run mad.

DOCTOR

Five dollars— Five dollars once, five dollars twice —five dollars—

(*Suddenly he stops and stares at* HENRY *as if perceiving something remarkable and strange about him. He mechanically wraps up the stone and drops it back in the case, never taking his eyes from the young man. He moves toward him and walks obliquely around him.* OLD JERNIGAN *watches him with open mouth. As the* DOCTOR *approaches him,* HENRY *turns and follows him suspiciously with his eyes.*)

HENRY

Hyuh, hyuh, what you up to?

(*The* DOCTOR *continues to stalk him. He draws back dramatically and points a sharp finger at* HENRY.)

DOCTOR

(*Grotesquely*)

Trouble.

JERNIGAN

(*Jumping and giggling nervously*)

Trouble, hee, hee!

HENRY

(*Staring at him*)

Trouble?

DOCTOR

(*His words again beginning to pour out in a roll*)

I see upon that brow suffering. My name is Immanuel. I am needed, needed here and now. (*Look-*

ing at him in anguish.) You are weak and heavy laden. Tell me. Speak forth your heart. I am come that ye might have rest from your suffering. Speak forth, thou unbeliever.

HENRY

Hyuh, hyuh, I ain't gonna have no monkey shines. (*With a touch of entreaty in his voice.*) Stop it now.

DOCTOR

(*Shaking his head mournfully*)

I must help you. I feel the call of pain. Speak forth your heart.

HENRY

(*Turning towards* OLD JERNIGAN)

What's he up to nohow?

JERNIGAN

Now, now, you needn't ax me.

(*There is a long silence while the* DOCTOR *stares fixedly at* HENRY.)

HENRY

(*Looking anxiously about the room and presently bursting out*)

I tell you to stop looking at me thataway!

DOCTOR

Trouble, trouble, suffering in the countenance of that face! (*Imploringly.*) Speak, speak, I have remedy for suffering. I can help and aid thee.

(*He clasps his hands and waits.* HENRY *stirs uneasily in his chair and* OLD JERNIGAN *teeters nervously on his feet, beating his thighs with the back of his hands. At last* OLD JERNIGAN *explodes.*)

JERNIGAN

Well, you air in trouble, Henry!— In a way ye're in the deepest sort of trouble. (*Muttering.*) Me, too, and me too.

DOCTOR

(*Triumphantly*)

Ah-hah! Speak, speak!

HENRY

(*Half in wrath and half in perplexed fear*)

Well, what'n the name of Old Scratch you want?

DOCTOR

Speak forth the evil that is possessing thee.

HENRY

(*Twisting about*)

You tell him, Pa, if they's any evil to be told.

JERNIGAN

Him and me's been seeing a right smart o' worry lately. We was talking about it before you come.

DOCTOR

I know, I perceive it.

JERNIGAN

(*Going on haltingly*)

As the scripture putts it, he's married to a wife.
(*He stops.*)

DOCTOR

One had his land, one had his yoke of oxen, another had his wife and could not come. As set forth in the gospel according to Luke.

JERNIGAN

(*Eagerly*)

That's it, Doctor, his wife's tuk possession of everything hyuh.

HENRY

Now, now.

JERNIGAN

Well, she has. And that there doctor kin help you, I done told you he could. (*He steps nimbly out into the room and sweeps it with his arms.*) Look a-here, will you? Look at that there h'a'th. Clean as a sheet. And the floor and everything. A speck o' dirt got no home hyuh and we ain't nuther. (*Pointing to the sewing-machine.*) And look over there at that there sewing. My good coat and britches gone fer good, all fer the heathen over the water.

HENRY

You mought stop trying to tell everything.

JERNIGAN

Well, you tell it then.

HENRY

Go on then and say what you wush.

JERNIGAN

All right and I will as shore as you're born. That's just it, doctor, she's plumb tuk with religion and sweeping and talking.

DOCTOR

Where is the lady of the house?

JERNIGAN

Off, off.

DOCTOR

A common case, a common case. The man must stand up and be the master. The scripture tells as much.

JERNIGAN

(*Jubilantly*)

There you air, Henry, there you air. (*Jerking his thumb at* HENRY.) But he won't, he won't, not him. He sets lak a wedge in the rain and takes it every bit. Big as a house he is and ain't got no backbone in him more 'n a sack.

DOCTOR

Timid? Afraid? Lacking in manly courage?

HENRY

(*Wrathfully*)

Go on and have it your way!

DOCTOR

Doctor Immanuel will provide. He can cure.

JERNIGAN

You cure 'em both and I'll pay you. Fix it so's I kin chew my tobacco in peace and here's a five-dollar bill fer ye.

(*He pulls out his pocketbook.*)

DOCTOR

I shall cure them, I must cure them, I will cure them. Amen!

JERNIGAN

Do that and this here's your'n.

(*He flaps a bill in his hands. The* DOCTOR *begins to pace up and down the room, pushing back his hair and mumbling to himself.*)

DOCTOR

(*Snapping*)

When will the lady of this house return?

HENRY

She just stepped across the field. But you needn't be planning none of your mess, I ain't gonna take no part in it.

DOCTOR

Mess! Mess!
(*He resumes his walk.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Becoming excited*)

I dunno what you gonna do, Doctor, but I jest betcha you do it. (*Gleefully.*) I bet he does, Henry. Yeh, she'll be right back.

DOCTOR

No sooner said than done. (*Whirling upon* HENRY.) I can cure you both. I can bring peace and order into this distracted home. I can make a man of might out of you. I can make you a mighty man in Israel, both in deed and in word. I can bring back humility and love to the erring woman's heart. Yea (*lifting up his voice*) I can prepare a proper helpmeet for you in your distress. (*Thundering and glaring.*) But—but—have you faith in my powers?

HENRY

I dunno—I dunno— Hah, crazy!

JERNIGAN

(*Ecstatically*)

Try to raise up yer faith, Henry. (*Grinding his hands in excitement.*) Hurry up, Henry, hurry up, she's gonna be back in a minute.

HENRY

(*Shaking his head weakly*)

I'm scared of all this business. How I know he won't kill me or something or hurt her?

DOCTOR

Kill! Hurt! (*His jaw falling open in amazement.*) Alas, young man, your words are wild, wild and full of poison to my kindly heart. (*His tone suddenly changes to anger.*) Take your own benighted way then. I offer you peace, you choose strife. So be it.

(JERNIGAN *grasps* HENRY'S *arms in supplication.*)

JERNIGAN

Henry, Henry, try it, try it, boy!

DOCTOR

(*Raising a warning hand*)

But listen, before I depart over the creek— (*To himself.*) A mule there swelled with the colic— Behold salvation is at hand and you refuse it.

JERNIGAN

Air ye crazy, Henry? There he is now going off.

HENRY

(*Beginning to show an unwilling interest under the* DOCTOR'S *spell*)

Well—

DOCTOR

(*Picking up his hat*)

I shall say no more.

JERNIGAN

Henry, Henry, don't let him go off like that there!

(*The* DOCTOR *picks up his case and moves towards the door.*)

HENRY

Well, if you're shore you won't hurt me ner her, I mought—

DOCTOR

(*Apparently no longer interested in him*)

Well, good night and may you endure your punishment as befits a sufferer so blind.

(*He grasps the door knob.*)

JERNIGAN

Henry, Henry!

HENRY

Are you shore you won't hurt me?

DOCTOR

Faith! Have you faith?

HENRY

(*Standing up with sudden decision*)

Well, I'll try it then, by God! Where's your medicine? Bring it on.

(*With an amazingly agile bound the doctor springs back into the room.*)

DOCTOR

Saved! Saved! (*He opens his case and searches in its depths. Extracting two tiny bottles, he holds them up in his hands.* HENRY *sits down again watching him with open mouth.*) Ah, here they are, Doctor Immanuel's Cure for the Unhappy Soul. The one is red, the other gray. The red is for the rich blood of manhood. Drink it and you become masterful, fearless, a tamer of the weaker sex. They will bow down to you, worship you, feed upon your words of wisdom as upon honey-dew. Let the woman drink the gray and the man the red. He becomes the lord of his house and his goods. She becomes the meek and lowly helpmeet. There she sits by the fire silent, gentle and sweet. There he sits her master, her lord.

JERNIGAN

(*His eyes shining*)

Listen at him, Henry, listen at him talk.

DOCTOR

(*Lifting up the red vial*)

I remember, I remember. I see in the past. It is a night of storm. The moon is sick and pale and wasting in the west.

The pale moon doth rain,
The pale moon doth blow,
It bringeth water in its beak.
The white moon doth neither rain nor snow.

I rise up in my dreams. Doctor Immanuel comes forth from his couch at the midnight hour, for now it is the time to seek for the cure of the unhappy souls. Silently I go through the forest towards the appointed place. The rain and the wind they comfort me on my journey. I go forth alone in the forest, under the watchful heavens. The signs are right in the sky, it is the time of the bull, and the bull means life and more abundant life. (*He waves his hands before his face and treads up and down the room acting out his journey.* HENRY *and* OLD JERNIGAN *stare at him as if mesmerized.*) I go by the elder bush in the pathless swamp, I touch the sorrel tree, and place my hand upon the bark of the smooth bay tree. I mount the hill and taste of the sweet sassafras and a bit of the bitter pine, and I, Doctor Immanuel, as the cocks begin to crow, come to the place of the silent old man and he waits for me. He has had his dream. Together we go far to the east, he with six dried sticks of the bloody mulberry and I with six of the nameless bush under our arms. We come where the young strong man died for love and his rich red blood ran into the ground. There we set the pot and build the fire. (*His voice takes on a hypnotic monotone and he moves back and forth in the room with the queer unreal steps of a jumping-jack.*) And into the pot Doctor Immanuel casts his one and two and three. And likewise the silent one casts his one and two and three which shall not be named till time is done. The bottles are brought forth and filled. The silent old one to his home again which none but two can find. And Doctor

Immanuel forth into the world to heal the distressed. (*His voice dies away and he hums to himself.*)

HENRY

(*Breaking from the spell*)
Ain't he crazy right?

DOCTOR

(*Picking up the gray vial and throwing up his hand*)
And hark! (*He stands with his hand uplifted, and they wait.*) It is night, a night of peace. The farmer sleeps his toil away, and the stock rest in the stall. The seeds wait in the earth, in the warm ground. The poor bird sits in the hedgerow and the snake goes not forth to prey. And now the old moon sleeps in the new moon's arms, hanging in the heavens above the three dark pines. (*Again he falls to striding up and down the floor.*) Doctor Immanuel is forth from his couch. The signs are right. The virgin walks in the sky. He comes to the three dark pines and waits in prayer. And the three maids of the deep swamp minister unto him, they minister unto him. Out of the darkness they come with song and with dancing, their heads hanging low and their rings shining and their garments flashing silver with the flames of gold. (*He turns and stares at* HENRY *who watches him groggily.*) From the mud of the turtle and the scaly snake they come, rising out of the deep night time, out of the mire and swampy slime, where the owl and the bat and the fever are. They rise, bringing the cure, the gray cure, the draught of humility, of peace. (*He*

stares at the gray vial and stands lost in thought. Presently he turns, his voice humming.) Drink the red and be filled with life and power; drink the gray, become the meek and gentle of the earth. Doctor Immanuel has said his say!

(*He begins walking back and forth across the room.* HENRY *and* OLD JERNIGAN *stare at him as if fascinated. Far off a woman's voice is heard in song. It draws nearer, and* MATTIE *passes around the house, singing "Rescue the Perishing" and goes into the kitchen.*)

HENRY

(*Swallowing hard*)

Hyuh, they's something quare!

JERNIGAN

He's gonna cure you, Henry. He is! Sink yer trust in him, Henry!

DOCTOR

Come, drink the drink! (*He closes his case and sets the two bottles on top of it.*) Call the lady of the house. She shall have the gray.

HENRY

(*Starting from his dream, sidling up to the bottles, and staring at them suspiciously*)

Mought be something in it, mought not. (*A queer unreal smile breaks over his face and he comes up to the* DOCTOR *and stares at him intently.*) All right, dinged if I don't do it. Dinged if I don't!

(MATTIE'S *sharp insistent voice is heard in the kitchen.*)

MATTIE

Father! Fathe-er-r! Henry! Henr-y!

JERNIGAN

Drink it, swallow it down, Henry! Can't be no worse'n. (*He turns and mocks* MATTIE.) Father! Henry! and (*singing*): "Rescue the Perishing—" Go on, Henry.

(HENRY *picks up the red vial, uncorks it and smells it and sets it down, then takes up the gray one and does likewise.*)

HENRY

Why, it don't smell like nothing a-tall.

DOCTOR

(*Stopping in his walk and looking at him piercingly*) Bid the lady of the house come in.

HENRY

(*Throwing his head about and beating himself as if trying to fight off the* DOCTOR'S *influence*) You call her, Pa.

(*The door flies open at the left and* MATTIE *springs in with a pan of burnt biscuits in her hands.*)

MATTIE

(*In a shrill, nervous voice*)

Look what you've done, both of you. I told you not to let the biscuits burn.

(JERNIGAN *looks at* HENRY *and* HENRY *looks at him.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Finally*)

I thought Henry was looking after them biscuits.

HENRY

(*Fumbling*)

I didn't even think of 'em, Mattie.

MATTIE

I know. I know. That's just the way it is. That's just the way it is. That's always the way it is.

DOCTOR

Madam, lady of the house!

MATTIE

(*Starting back*)

Oh, I didn't see you, Doctor 'Manuel. Put some wood on the fire, Father. When'd you come, Doctor 'Manuel?

DOCTOR

Madam, when you appeared in the door we were in the midst of a most momentous question.

MATTIE

What'n the world is all this to-do about? You'll have to tell it quick, I've got to hurry and get supper. We are sewing here to-night—(*with a weary, defiant look towards* HENRY *and* OLD JERNIGAN)—sewing for the heathen.

DOCTOR

Madam, after to-night you will not bother about the heathen. You have enough trouble in your own household. We are solving that momentous question.

MATTIE

What in the world is all this to-do about, I ask you?

DOCTOR

(*With high dignity*)

Madam, behold the two bottles there. The one is red, the other gray. The red is for your husband, the gray for you.

MATTIE

Needn't think I'll drink any of your crazy mess.

DOCTOR

The husband will drink the red and take charge of his household. You will drink the gray and obey him in what he says hereafter.

MATTIE

The Lord help my life! (*Turning to* HENRY.)

Have you gone out'n your head same as him, to be taking on to such stuff?

HENRY

(*Timidly*)

Try and drink a little bit, Mattie. It won't hurt you! He says it's good for you.

MATTIE

The dog's foot!

HENRY

(*With a hint of determination in his voice*)

He's done said if I drink that stuff you won't know me for another man. (*Decisively.*) And I've said I'll drink it.

DOCTOR

He's going to drink his and you're going to drink yours.

MATTIE

That I'm not. I've never heard of such. Henry Jernigan, you must be crazy to fool with him.

HENRY

Yes, I'm gonna do it. I'm plumb tired of sich a mess of things. I'm gonna change it or die a-trying.

(*With a lunge he grabs one of the bottles and throws the contents down his throat.*)

MATTIE

(*Screaming*)

Henry, it'll poison you!

(HENRY *stands tasting with his lips and tongue. A foolish smile breaks over his face.*)

HENRY

Why, it ain't no more'n—

(*The* DOCTOR *brings his hand down on* HENRY'S *shoulder with a whack and stares significantly at him.* HENRY'S *eyes gradually narrow in comprehension and he turns and walks back and forth across the room thinking. The* DOCTOR *moves around as if unconcerned. Suddenly* HENRY *springs into the air with a yell.* OLD JERNIGAN *starts back and falls over a chair.*)

JERNIGAN

Lard, Lard a-mercy!

MATTIE

(*Running up to* HENRY)

Henry, Henry, honey, what is it?

HENRY

(*Tearing wildly around the room and shrieking*)

I'm pizened, pizened! Help, water, I'm afar inside.

(*He doubles over in pain.* MATTIE *pursues him wringing her hands. All the while the* DOCTOR *walks ecstatically and yet unconcernedly around the room, carrying on his automaton-like actions and his monologue.*)

DOCTOR

(*Chanting*)

As you all know, wherever I go,
My name is Immanuel.
I treat you well, I make you well,
As sound as the sweet church bell.
Down the road I travel,
Going in rain or shine,
Helping the sick and afflicted,
No medicine like unto mine.
This I tell who comes like Immanuel.

HENRY

(*Falling into a chair and slobbering heavily at the mouth as he gasps*)

Pizened! Pizened! Help, water!

(MATTIE *throws her arms around his neck.*)

MATTIE

Run, Father, run and bring the bucket of water. (*The old man shoots into the kitchen and back like a streak. All the while* MATTIE *is crooning over* HENRY *and rubbing his face and forehead feverishly.*) Oh, darling, honey. What can I do?

(*She breaks into wild sobs.*)

JERNIGAN

Hyuh, hyuh, drink some water, Henry.

(HENRY *springs out of his chair, knocking* MATTIE *from him. He souses his head in the bucket and drinks, spits out great mouthfuls of water on the floor and empties the bucket over*

his head. Then he stamps the bucket to pieces, shrieking and yelling): Hooah! I'm a-dying!

MATTIE

Run for the doctor, run for the doctor!

DOCTOR

I am Doctor Immanuel at your service, madam. (MATTIE *turns and glares at him a moment and slaps him in the face.* HENRY *snatches up the broom and begins chasing the* DOCTOR *around the room beating him. The* DOCTOR *makes an effort to get his case and hat as he is pursued, calling out*): This is wrong! Ye do not understand.

(*He opens the door and flees into the night.* HENRY *falls into a chair and rocks back and forth, groaning and moaning.* MATTIE *comes up to him, sobbing.*)

HENRY

(*Whirling and seizing* MATTIE *by the throat*)

Who are you? I know: Mattie. You sew for the heathen and worry your husband's life out about dirt. Now in the grave they'll be plenty of dirt. And you sing, and you sing; and you talk, and you talk. (*He grabs the remaining bottle and uncorks it.*) Drink this here bottle o' stuff.

MATTIE

(*Clenching her teeth and fighting back*)

I won't, I won't! It'll poison me, it'll kill me!

HENRY

(*Pulling open her mouth and pouring the contents in.*) Nunh-unh, I reckin it won't! (*She swallows and coughs and strangles, then drops to the floor crying.* HENRY *strides about the room kicking the furniture to pieces and throwing out his shoulders and shouting*): I'm a new man, a man o' might, a he-man in Israel! (*Turning upon* MATTIE.) And you have drunk the drink. You gonna be humbled down, a helpmate. (*He drops back in his chair in a dying posture.*)

MATTIE

Oh, Henry, Henry, baby!

HENRY

When I'm gone, take care of Pa. Let him live in peace. Let him have his tobacco and spet in the far.

(MATTIE *crawls on her knees before him and lays her head in his lap, weeping.*)

MATTIE

Get the doctor, Father. Hitch up and go for the doctor.

(OLD JERNIGAN *starts for the door.* HENRY *jumps up and snatches him back.*)

HENRY

You ain't, you ain't. Let me die in peace.

(*There is the sound of a medley of voices outside. Women gabbling in excitement.* MATTIE *climbs up to her feet and runs to the door.*)

MATTIE

Is that you, Mis' Bella? Come here, come here, quick! Henry's poisoned and he's a-dying.

(*The gabble and excitement outside increases. A voice replies from the yard.*)

VOICE

I'm coming, Mattie, I'm coming.

(*She is heard coming up on the steps.* HENRY *gets up from his chair and begins to bark like a dog, blubbering and growling.*)

HENRY

(*Shrieking again*)

I' been bit by a mad dog.

(*He barks.*)

VOICE

Lord a-mercy, he's run mad!

(*A low murmur of horror rises from the women outside, followed by shrieks and then the sound of running feet.* HENRY *rushes out of the door barking and pursuing them.*)

MATTIE

(*Looking at* OLD JERNIGAN *through her tears*)
He ain't been bit by no mad dog!

JERNIGAN

(*Stuttering with excitement*)

Mebbe that's the way pizen works. That doctor

said he got it a quare way in the middle of the night and a storm on and a' old man helping him.

MATTIE

He's crazy. (*Wringing her hands.*) Why'd you let him give Henry that stuff? The mess I took won't nothing, weak as water! (*She goes to the door calling piteously.*) Henry! Henry!

(OLD JERNIGAN *comes up to the bottle she has dropped and looks at it.*)

JERNIGAN

(*With a shout*)

He's tuk the wrong medicine, Mattie! He tuk that there gray stuff and you tuk the red!

MATTIE

(*At the door*)

Henry! Henry!

(HENRY *comes back on the porch and gives a farewell bark.* MATTIE *runs out and throws her arms around him. He flings her from him and strides into the room. His shoes are covered with mud. He goes to the fireplace and stamps it off on the hearth.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Running up to him excitedly*)

Hyuh, hyuh, you tuk that gray stuff. Look, look!

HENRY

(*Waving him off*)

It don't make no difference. 'Twon't nothing but water.

(MATTIE *comes in and stares at him as he casually cleans his boot on the hearth.*)

MATTIE

(*Whimpering*)

What's happened, Henry? You seem—

HENRY

I been cured, that's what. The medicine done it. (*He gets up, looks around the room, goes over to the machine, gathers up the clothes for the heathen, picks out a coat and trousers and throws them at the old man.*) Here, there's your Ransome Taylor coat and your britches. The heathen ain't gonna git 'em.

(*He wipes his shoes with the other garments and then calmly goes to his chair and sits down.* MATTIE *has been looking on a moment and then with a glad cry of comprehension falls on her knees by him and lays her head sobbing in his lap.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Dropping in his chair thunderstruck*)

Well, I be durned ef I ever seed the beat!

(*He thinks a moment and then breaks out in a low musical chuckle. His face spreads into a grin that breaks in a thousand wrinkles. He cuts a caper on the floor, stopping now and then trying to comprehend what has happened.* HENRY *sits solemnly stroking* MATTIE'S *head. The door is cracked open at the rear and* DOCTOR IMMANUEL *pokes his head in.*)

DOCTOR

Masters of this house—

HENRY

(*Turning and snarling*)

Hanh— Scat! (*He barks and the* DOCTOR *slams the door. After a moment* HENRY *calls* OLD JERNIGAN.) Pa, go and tell him to come in and get his hat and case. (MATTIE'S *sobs gradually die away.*) Yeh, I know, poor child, I did scare you, didn't I?

(*Only a whimper from* MATTIE *and hugging of* HENRY'S *knees answer him.*)

JERNIGAN

(*At the door*)

Come on in, Doctor, and get yer stuff. He ain't gonna hurt you.

(*The* DOCTOR *comes gravely in and gets his case and hat.*)

HENRY

Pa, give him that five dollars.

JERNIGAN

(*His sides shaking with enjoyment*)

Hyuh, hyuh, it is. You done it, Doc, same as you said you would.

HENRY

And you needn't come back. I don't need you! (*He lifts his head with decision written on his face.*) Lemme have a look at the plug of tobacco, Pa.

DOCTOR

(*At the door*)

Remember that I am always at your service. Peace abide with you and this house always. I am on my way now to another patient.

HENRY

That's all right, Doctor. You needn't bother about us. We ain't gonna need you no more. Are we, Mattie?

(MATTIE *shakes her head.*)

DOCTOR

(*Going out*)

As you all know, wherever I go,
My name is Immanuel.

(*He closes the door and his chant dies away in the night.*)

HENRY

I said, Pa, I'd like to have a look at that tobacco.

MATTIE

(*Raising her head*)

Don't you spit on—

HENRY

(*Crushing her back to the floor*)

Nanh, nanh, I tell you I been cured. I'm boss. (*Breaking into a loud roaring laugh.*) Hooray!

Scene from *Quare Medicine*, a country comedy, by Paul Green. Doctor Immanuel (Charlie Gold); Mattie Jernigan (Helen Leatherwood); Henry Jernigan (E. R. Patterson); Old Man Jernigan (Claudius Mintz).

Henry: I tell you I been cured. I'm boss. Hooray! Hooray! I'm another man. I'm cured, I'm boss!

Photograph by Wootten-Moulton.

Hooray! I'm another man, I'm cured, I'm boss. Gimme that 'backer.

(*The old man hands it to him eagerly.* HENRY *bites off an enormous chew and hands the plug back. Old* JERNIGAN *hesitates a moment and then also bites off a mouthful. A look of deep content comes over him. He snuggles into his chair and chews.* HENRY *chews. They look across at each other.* HENRY *signifies to the old man with a motion of his hand that he spit first.* OLD JERNIGAN *with a vast gesture refuses.* HENRY *spits profusely and loudly in the direction of the fire.* OLD JERNIGAN *does likewise.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Eyeing* HENRY *slyly, as he rolls his tobacco sweetly in his mouth*)

Hee-hee!

(MATTIE *sits hugging* HENRY'S *knees.*)

HENRY

(*Nodding happily and wisely*)

Unh-hunh-yeh.

(*They sit saying nothing. Presently* HENRY *looks over at the old man and laughs suddenly and deeply.*)

JERNIGAN

What?

HENRY

I run them there women right into the mudhole out there.

JERNIGAN

(*Beating his thigh gleefully*)
Hee-hee! Hee-hee!

HENRY

I shore did.

(*They lapse into silence. By this time* MATTIE *has raised her head and is staring contemplatively by* HENRY'S *shin into the fire.*)

JERNIGAN

(*Shivering a bit and stirring the fire*)
Gonna be cold, Henry, cold.

HENRY

Yeh.

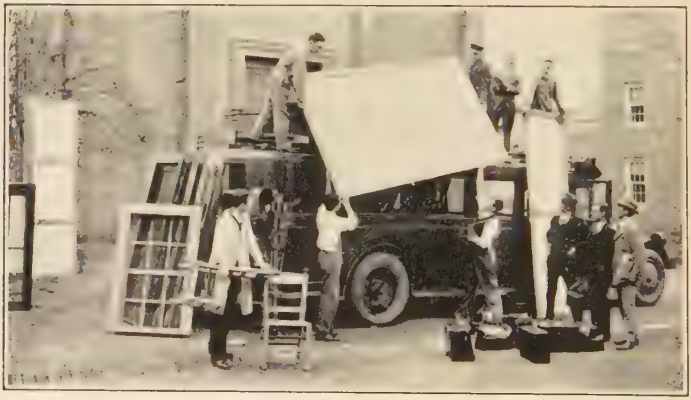
JERNIGAN

Robins been flying towards the South all day.

(*They both lean towards the fire and spit.*)

CURTAIN

The Carolina Playmakers trouping through Georgia.



The Carolina Playmakers loading their bus for one of their tours.

Photographs by Wootten-Moulton.

APPENDIX I

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

1924–1925 to 1927–1928 *

I. ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS OF "CAROLINA FOLK-PLAYS"

THE FOURTEENTH BILL 1924–1925

December 4–5, 1924

THE HONOR OF BONAVA, A Chapter from Reconstruction Days, by *Robert Watson Winston.*

POLITICIN' IN HORSE COVE, A Comedy of Mountain Folk, by *Martha Boswell.*

THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS, A Tragedy of the Lowrie Gang, by *William Norment Cox.*

THE FIFTEENTH BILL 1924–1925

May 8–9, 1925

OLD IMES, A Comedy of the Village Store, by *Ray Heffner.*

THE THRICE-PROMISED BRIDE, A Chinese Folk-Play, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

* For the list of Productions and Tours from 1918-1919 to 1923-1924 see Appendix I of *Second Series* of *Carolina Folk-Plays.*

THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS, A Tragedy of the Lowrie Gang, by *William Norment Cox.*

THE SIXTEENTH BILL 1925–1926

DEDICATION OF THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE

November 23–24–25–26, 1925

OUT OF THE PAST, A Romance of College Life at Carolina in '61, by *Frances Gray.*

YON SIDE O' SUNK CREEK, A Tragedy of Mountain Folk, by *Martha Boswell.*

QUARE MEDICINE, A Country Comedy of a Quack Doctor, by *Paul Green.*

THE SEVENTEENTH BILL 1925–1926

March 12–13, 1926

A CAROLINA PIERROT, A Play of Pierrot on the University Campus, by *William J. Macmillan.*

CLAY, A Play of the Farm, by *David Reid Hodgin.*

THE NEW MOON, A Whimsical Folk-Fantasy, by *Telfair Peet.*

THE EIGHTEENTH BILL 1926–1927

February 10–11, 1927

IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, A Comedy of a Country Courtship, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay*

LIGHTED CANDLES, A Tragedy of the Carolina Highlands, by *Margaret Bland.*

THE MUSE AND THE MOVIES, A Comedy of Greenwich Village, by *Alice Rodewald.*

THE NINETEENTH BILL 1926–1927

May 5–6, 1927

MR. PERRY WRITES A PLAY, A Burlesque of Folk-Play Writing, by *William DeCatur Perry.*

QUARE MEDICINE, A Country Comedy of a Quack Doctor, by *Paul Green.*

THE MARVELOUS ROMANCE OF WEN CHUN-CHIN, A Chinese Folk Comedy, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

THE TWENTIETH BILL 1927–1928

February 10–11, 1928

MOUNTAIN MAGIC, A California Folk-Play, by *Edith Daseking.*

JOB'S KINFOLKS, A Tragedy of the Mill People, by *Loretto Carroll Bailey.*

THE QUEEN HAS HER FACE LIFTED, A Fantastic Satire, by *Alvin M. Kahn.*

THE TWENTY-FIRST BILL 1927–1928

March 30–31, 1928

THE NEW EVE, An Expressionistic Play of the Future, by *Mary Dirnberger.*

DAY'S END, A California Folk-Play, by *Alice Pieratt.*

A SHOT-GUN SPLICIN', A Mountain Comedy, by *Gertrude Wilson Coffin.*

II. THE PLAYMAKERS' TOURS.

THE NINTH TOUR

November 12–26, 1924

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

THE HONOR OF BONAVA, by *Robert Watson Winston;* POLITICIN' IN HORSE COVE, by *Martha Boswell;* THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS, by *William Norment Cox.*

THE TENTH TOUR

January 23 to February 2, 1925

NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA

GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb;* FIXIN'S, by *Paul* and *Erma Green;* WHEN WITCHES RIDE, by *Elizabeth A. Lay.*

THE ELEVENTH TOUR

April 24 to May 9, 1925

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

OLD IMES, by *Ray Heffner;* THE THRICE-PROMISED BRIDE, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung;* THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS, by *William Norment Cox.*

THE TWELFTH TOUR

December 11–14, 1925

NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA

QUARE MEDICINE, by *Paul Green;* FIXIN'S, by *Paul* and *Erma Green*; GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

THE THIRTEENTH TOUR

February 5-20, 1926

NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, MARYLAND AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

QUARE MEDICINE, by *Paul Green;* FIXIN'S, by *Paul* and *Erma Green;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

THE FOURTEENTH TOUR

April 5–12, 1926

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

THE FIRST YEAR, by *Frank Craven.*

THE FIFTEENTH TOUR

April 30 to May 12, 1926

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

THE FIRST YEAR, by *Frank Craven.*

THE SIXTEENTH TOUR

November 11–22, 1926

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

She Stoops to Conquer, by *Oliver Goldsmith.*

THE SEVENTEENTH TOUR

February 22nd to March 19th, 1927

NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA

Trista, by *Elizabeth Lay;* Old Wash Lucas (or The Miser), by *Paul Green;* In Dixon's Kitchen, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

THE EIGHTEENTH TOUR

May 7–19, 1927

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA

Quare Medicine, by *Paul Green;* Lighted Candles, by *Margaret Bland;* The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

THE NINETEENTH TOUR

November 5–25, 1927

NORTH CAROLINA, VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW YORK

THE SCUFFLETOWN OUTLAWS, by *William Norment Cox;* FIXIN'S, by *Paul* and *Erma Green;* LIGHTED CANDLES, by *Margaret Bland;* ON DIXON'S PORCH, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

THE TWENTIETH TOUR

February 17–29, 1928

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

LIGHTED CANDLES, by *Margaret Bland;* MOUNTAIN MAGIC, by *Edith Daseking;* THE MARVELOUS ROMANCE OF WEN CHUN-CHIN, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

THE TWENTY-FIRST TOUR

May 4–15, 1928

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA AND TENNESSEE

MOUNTAIN MAGIC, by *Edith Daseking;* JOB'S KINFOLKS, by *Loretto Carroll Bailey;* A SHOTGUN SPLICIN', by *Gertrude Wilson Coffin.*

III. THE FOREST THEATRE PRODUCTIONS.

THE RIVALS, by *Richard Brinsley Sheridan,* May 29–30, 1925 (*Sesquicentennial Revival*).

THE POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL, by *Eleanor Gates,* August 21, 1925.

THE ROMANCERS, by *Edmond Rostand,* May 28–29, 1926.

A Thousand Years Ago, by *Percy MacKaye,* August 24, 1926.

The Tempest, by *William Shakespeare,* April 30 and May 1, 1928 (*Benefit Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Fund*).

IV. OTHER PRODUCTIONS.

The Torch-Bearers, by *George Kelly,* March 10–11, 1925.

The First Year, by *Frank Craven,* February 1–2–3, 1926.

Le Malade Imaginaire, by *Molière,* May 21–22, 1926 (*in French*).

A Thousand Years Ago, by *Percy MacKaye,* October 15–16, 1926.

She Stoops to Conquer, by *Oliver Goldsmith,* December 3–4, 1926.

Le Barbier de Seville, by *Beaumarchais,* March 30–31, 1927 (*in French*).

The Annual Caper, May 28, 1927.

Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, by *William W. Pratt,* December 9–10, 1927.

Twelfth Night Revels, January 6, 1928.

The Annual Caper, May 26, 1928.

The Impertinence of the Creature, by *Cosmo Gordon-Lennox;* Cocaine, by *Pendleton King;* Brothers in Arms, by *Merrill Dennison;* Francoise' Luck, by *Georges de Porte-Riche;* The Mirror, by *Catherine M. Roof;* The Constant Lover, by *St. John*

Hankin, May 28–29, 1928 (*Studio Productions*).

You and I, by *Philip Barry*, July 19–20–21, 1928.

V. SPECIAL PERFORMANCES.

The Carolina Dramatic Association, Chapel Hill, May 8, 1925. Old Imes, by *Ray Heffner;* The Scuffletown Outlaws, by *William Norment Cox;* The Thrice-Promised Bride, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

The Seventh Commencement Performance, Chapel Hill, June 9, 1925. The Rivals, by *Richard Brindsley Sheridan.*

The National Recreation Congress, Asheville, North Carolina, October 6, 1925. Gaius and Gaius, Jr., by *Lucy M. Cobb;* Old Wash Lucas, by *Paul Green.*

For Freshmen, Chapel Hill, October 8, 1925. Gaius and Gaius, Jr., by *Lucy M. Cobb;* Old Wash Lucas, by *Paul Green.*

The North Carolina Librarians Association, Chapel Hill, November 19, 1925. Out of the Past, by *Frances Gray.*

The State Literary and Historical Association of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina, December 9, 1925. Out of the Past, by *Frances Gray;* Yon Side o' Sunk Creek, by *Martha Boswell;* Quare Medicine, by *Paul Green.*

The North Carolina Press Association,

Chapel Hill, January 14, 1926. QUARE MEDICINE, by *Paul Green.*

SPECIAL TOUR: Fayetteville and Red Springs, North Carolina, March 4–5, 1926. THE FIRST YEAR, by *Frank Craven.*

THE DRAMATIC INSTITUTE (*The Carolina Dramatic Association*), Chapel Hill, March 25, 1926. QUARE MEDICINE, by *Paul Green;* CLAY, by *David Reid Hodgin.*

THE ROTARY CLUB CONVENTION, Durham, North Carolina, April 20, 1926. GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

SPECIAL TOUR; Siler City, and Pittsboro, North Carolina, March 26–27, 1926. QUARE MEDICINE, by *Paul Green;* CLAY, by *David R. Hodgin;* GAIUS AND GAIUS, JR., by *Lucy M. Cobb.*

SPECIAL TOUR; Pittsboro, North Carolina, February 12, 1927. IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay;* LIGHTED CANDLES, by *Margaret Bland;* THE MUSE AND THE MOVIES, by *Alice Rodewald.*

REPERTORY REVIVAL; Chapel Hill, March 12, 1927. TRISTA, by *Elizabeth Lay;* OLD WASH LUCAS, by *Paul Green;* OLD ENGLISH FOLK DANCES, directed by *Josephine Sharkey.*

THE FOURTH DRAMATIC INSTITUTE (*Carolina Dramatic Association*), Chapel Hill, March 26, 1927. IN DIXON'S KITCHEN, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay;* OLD ENGLISH FOLK DANCES, directed by *Josephine Sharkey.*

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF

University Extension, Chapel Hill, April 26, 1927. Quare Medicine, by *Paul Green;* Old English Folk Dances, directed by *Josephine Sharkey.*

The National Association of Alumni Secretaries, Chapel Hill, April 28, 1927. Quare Medicine, by *Paul Green;* Old English Folk Dances, directed by *Josephine Sharkey.*

The Summer Session, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, August 18–19, 1927. The Scuffletown Outlaws, by *William Norment Cox;* In Dixon's Kitchen, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

For Freshmen, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, November 5, 1927. The Scuffletown Outlaws, by *William Norment Cox;* Lighted Candles, by *Margaret Bland;* On Dixon's Porch, by *Wilbur Stout* and *Ellen Lay.*

The Annual Newspaper Institute, Chapel Hill, January 12, 1928. Ten Nights in a Bar-Room, by *William W. Pratt.*

The Chapel Hill School, Chapel Hill, February 16, 1928. The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin, by *Cheng-Chin Hsiung.*

The Southern Regional Conference on the Drama, Chapel Hill, April 5, 1928. Lighted Candles, by *Margaret Bland;* Job's Kinfolks, by *Loretto Carroll Bailey;* A Shotgun Splicin', by *Gertrude Wilson Coffin.*

APPENDIX II

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1924–1925 to *1927–1928* *

I. ARTICLES ABOUT THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS.

THEATRE OF THE FOLK, Editorial article.
The Boston Transcript, October 4, 1924.

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS, by *Rose Henderson.*
The Christian Science Monitor, January 19, 1925.

FOLK-PLAY MAKING IN DAKOTA AND IN CAROLINA, by *Frederick H. Koch.*
The Playground, January, 1925.

NATIVE AMERICAN DRAMA, Editorial article. (Illustrated.)
Our World Weekly, March 30, 1925.

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APPENDIX III

DEDICATION OF THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE

November 23, 1925

By

FREDERICK H. KOCH

Founder of The Carolina Playmakers

and

HARRY WOODBURN CHASE

President of the University of North Carolina

Seven years ago The Carolina Playmakers presented their initial group of folk-plays on a makeshift stage which they designed and constructed in the auditorium of the Chapel Hill High School. To-night we have come to dedicate this historic building as The Playmakers Theatre.

They were simple plays,—these first plays—the work of youthful writers. But they interpreted in new dramatic forms the life and ways of their own people.

Since then The Playmakers have produced forty-two of their Carolina plays, representing thirty different authors. Three volumes of the plays have been published; two, the work of various members of the group; and one, the plays of a single author. These

plays are recognized as marking the beginnings of an authentic American folk drama.

To be sure they are plays of a single locality,—but they have a wider significance. For the locality, if it be truly interpreted, is the only universal. It has been so in all lasting art.

In dedicating this building North Carolina takes a unique place in these United States; for our theatre is really a State Theatre—the first in America to be devoted to the making of its own native drama.

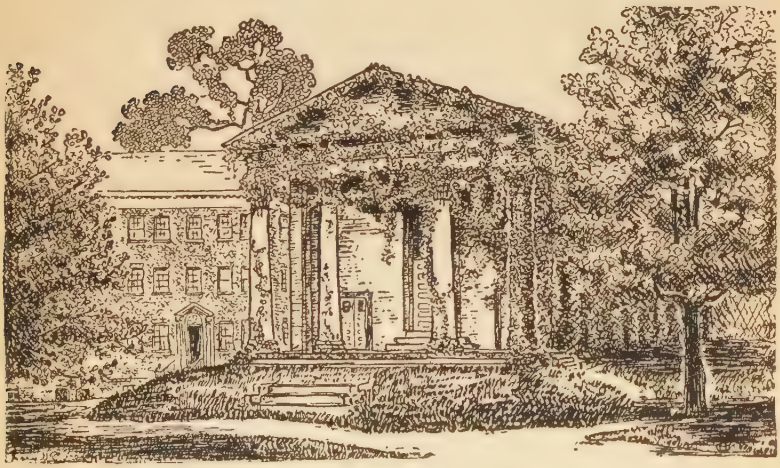
We conceive of our state university as the intellectual and cultural center of North Carolina, and it is fitting that North Carolina should establish here at Chapel Hill a building dedicated to the expression of the lives of her people in the dramatic arts.

And so we have a distinct responsibility,—an important work to do in the dramatic renaissance of which we are a part. May our peoples theatre of to-day interpret the struggle and the vision of our common life towards a new republic of enduring literature.

Through the joint action of the Carnegie Corporation and the University, this building has been made available as a permanent home for The Carolina Playmakers. That it will be worthily used the extraordinary achievement of the Playmakers during the years gives every assurance. We therefore dedicate it tonight in the confidence that it may make possible about our common life a little more of the stuff that dreams are made of; that its existence here shall mean a little

less monotony, a little more glamour about our days; that the horizons of imagination shall by its presence here be enlarged so that we shall come more steadily and wholly to see the place of beauty and of its handmaiden, art, in a civilization not too much given to its encouragement. To such purposes, Mr. Director, this building, the first permanent provision for any of the fine arts at the University, is from this night set apart.

To you and the group you have built up here, the University wishes godspeed as in these surroundings, themselves beautiful and historic, it follows the gospel of beauty through the years.



THE PLAYMAKERS THEATRE

This historic building, originally the University Library and Ballroom, and later the School of Law, has been reconstructed and equipped as a permanent home for THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS. *It is the first state-owned theatre in America to be devoted to its own native drama.*

APPENDIX IV

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS

A Summary: 1918-1928

During the past ten years The Carolina Playmakers have produced 59 of their original folk-plays by 42 different authors. Eight of these are early plays by Paul Green, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1927, for his epic tragedy of the negro, "In Abraham's Bosom."

And to-day, since the simple beginnings of The Carolina Playmakers, three other native North Carolinians besides Paul Green—Lulu Volmer, Hatcher Hughes, and Anne Bridgers—have made an important contribution to American folk drama.

The Playmakers have made 21 tours, playing in every nook and corner of their own state, and into Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania and New York.

They have played in 63 different towns in North Carolina and in 27 of the leading cities in other states to 347 different audiences, numbering in all more than 150,000 people. Their plays have been widely read and produced in towns and cities all over the United States.

They now have their own well-equipped building on the campus of the University—The Playmakers Theatre, the first state-owned theatre in America to be devoted to the making of its own native drama.

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